

YOUTHSHADES

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NOVEMBER 2017



DISABILITY

Poems On Disability | Are You Suffering From Poor Erection?
| The Mermaid At The RiverBank | Turning Your Talent Into A
Career | The Perks Of Dating A F*ckboy

ABOUT YOUTH SHADES

Youth Shades is an online international magazine, which explores sociocultural issues through spheres of literary genres such as fiction (poetry and stories), non-fiction (essays, opinion pieces/articles and memoirs and reviews), Arts and Skills.

In our Arts & Skills segment, we feature works in the trend of Visual Arts - paintings, abstract illustrations, drawings, cartoons - which reflect societal colourations of cultures, people and places. Also celebrated in this sect are exhibitions of creativities, especially those with diversities creatively put together. By creativity, we mean skills including Makeovers, Fashion Designs, and Photography.

80% of the target audiences are the youths; such is expedient owing to the observed rapid derailing exuberance among that sect of persons. Youth Shades Magazine is therefore aimed at exposing and condemning societal ills while attempting to curb such on the one hand, and on the other hand, celebrating virtues against vices. Another objective of Youth Shades Magazine is to bridge geographical gaps between continents.

The Magazine is a platform for established, up-and-coming writers and artists to display their talents. We love to publish original content that have never been published elsewhere.

Daily submissions are hereby welcomed from gifted hands in the above genres. Please, note that the acceptance of any submission is based on credibility, social relevance, public health and originality of the submissions. By submitting to us, the submitter has agreed to our terms of being published without a pay from us, having the platform as one for self-exhibition, contribution to art and promotion.

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written consent of Youth Shades. Apart from the winning poems, the rest are not arranged in any special order.

Youth Shades,
Righting wry things...

Call for Submission

December 2017 Issue

For its December 2017 Issue, Youth Shades Online magazine calls for submission from ardent writers in the following categories:

POETRY

This category is for **Nigerians ONLY**.

- Email **ONE** poem on the theme – **PEACE** to *info@youthshades.com*
- Include the theme, your poem's title and your name in the subject of the email. *For example: Passion, This is my Passion, John Osas.*
- You can write the poem in the body of the email or attach it as a Microsoft Word Document (.doc)
- Your Poem should not be longer than 14 lines.
- Your poem should be original and never published elsewhere.
- Alongside your poem, send us your bio stating the following:

1. Tell us about yourself
2. What prompted you to begin writing poetry?
3. What conditions help you with your writing process?
4. Why do you think poetry is important?
5. Who is your favorite poet and why?

FICTION

Anyone can send an entry for this category irrespective of nationality.

- Email one story to *info@youthshades.com*
- Your story should be less than 1,500 words.
- Your story can be on any social or cultural theme.
- Include the title of your story, your country and your name in the subject of the email.
- You can write the story in the body of the email or attach it as a Microsoft Word Document (.doc)

- Your story should be original and never published elsewhere.
- Alongside your story, send us your bio of less than 50 words.

CREATIVE NON-FICTION

Anyone can send an entry for this category irrespective of nationality.

- Same submission guidelines as stated under the FICTION category above.

ARTICLES

Anyone can send an entry for this category irrespective of nationality.

- Email one article on lifestyle topics such as health, beauty, fitness, food & drinks, diet, culture, business, environment, inspiration, relationships, education, fashion, etc to info@youthshades.com
- Same submission guidelines as stated under the FICTION category above.

ARTS & SKILLS

Anyone can send an entry for this category irrespective of nationality.

- Paintings, abstract illustrations, drawings, cartoons, makeovers, fashion designs, photography, etc are to be included in this publication. Artists can email their creative works (less than 3), sending them as attachments to info@youthshades.com
- Include your name and country in subject of the email.
- Alongside your creative works, send us your bio of less than 50 words.

THERE ARE NO PRIZES FOR OTHER CATEGORIES, EXCEPT POETRY;
Youth Shades will only promote works of artists and other writers.

Why you should submit to us:

- Your work gets published and exposed to an international audience as we have readers across several continents including Africa, Asia, South America and Europe.
- ALL entries will be promoted on our website – <http://www.youthshades.com> continuously for two (2) months.
- The winner of the Poetry Contest bags \$10 and we will publish his/her bio.
- You can submit different poems every month on different competition themes; this means you can partake in the competition as often as you want and increase your chances of winning.

DO NOT INDULGE IN PLAGIARISM; SUCH WORKS WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED.

Only works that follow the submission guidelines will be accepted, compiled and published.

Submission deadline is 25th November, 2017

Poetry

WINNING PIECE: UN-ABLE by Nathaniel Okolo

She sits still at the window sill
Through the window of her eyes
She gazes through the window of her home
The undulating waves beckon her
As the tides wash ashore, so do her memories
Of times of frolicking so nimbly with both limbs
When she pounded the sands of the beach with the pestle of her feet
Now, she cannot even skip a pebble across the seas skin

She sits still at the window sill
Trapped by the chair with wheels on its sides
Perhaps she will skip the pebble; with her mind
And imagine it going to places
Places her now broken limbs never could take her

Judge's Note

This poem won based on;
-concurrence with theme
-use of precise and poetic expressions
-use of moderate diction
-style and creativity
-audience appeal...
among others
72%

UN-ABLE is thematic instilling much as possible of the pains of the disabled. It is a poem in which a cripple reckoned her past in her present state then envisaged her future without the deformity. The poet made use of catchy expressions with mild choice of words.

FIRST RUNNER-UP: QUADRIPLEGIC DREAMS by Emminex Paradox

Sometimes I break myself into shards of worries,

Feeling empty, like this mortal body is not mine anymore.
Most nights I feign courage to face my fears like a knight,
Yet I find myself defeated at the feet of despair,
With twin tiny rivulets of tears trailing the path
Down the parched plain of my melanin-infested face.
My dreams are metaphors of crippled ripples,
Traversing the crystalline waters sprawled atop
The scrawny skin of my frail and fickle mind.
I want to learn to fly, but the limbs I have for wings
Have been paralyzed by palpable paroxysms of sorrow;
I want to kiss the sky, but my lips are a vile testament of
Charred thoughts, spewed from the deep dark recesses of my mind.
I am but a victim of broken memories....

Judge's Note

This poem came second due to the following;

- fair compliance with theme
 - use of precise and poetic expressions
 - use of strong diction
 - fairly regular meter
 - style and creativity
- 70%

The poet started rather perfectly but the ambiguity in the last four lines of *QUADRIPLEGIC DREAMS* diminished the appeal. The expressions were indeed poetically sumptuous and the wordage was sublime but the intention was altered towards the end.

SECOND RUNNER-UP: "IF ONLY" by Wakchin Nengak

You shame our figures,
And jeer our want of wholeness.
If only we need no wheeled couch
And our claws can clinch when we try to grasp,
If only our vigour meant able
And lets us go places devoid of groping,
If our limbs were erect
And let us walk about like your body does,
Will lips mock the shape nature carved us in?
For how can one stretch his lesioned limbs?
Oh! my hearts beats at the speed of rage!
To see me creep to sate my needs like an infant

Judge's Note

This poem came third place because:
It complied with the theme,
The expressions used were appealing,
The choice of words is moderate and
It depicts stylishness and creativity.
69%

The poem might have reached farther if the last few lines were more consistent and segmentation was checked.

THE SHINING by Iliya Kambai Dennis

There, she lies and smile
At the world behind her.
Uncouth are the recollection of her
Dreams in the world that lies ahead.
The earth has given us nothing
To hope for than the hopes
We were born with.
What gives faith, hope, certainty
Isn't define by the benevolence
Of the soviet
But the sweetness of our
Optimism & unending struggle.

MY STORY by **David Adedokun**

At the period between midnight and twilight,
The milky moon gazed at the formation,
Bones jointed, muscles braided and blood vessels laid,
A new being about to be born.
If choices were laid unclad,
No man will want to look sad.

At the period between dawn and dusk,
The spotlight sun watching the manifestation,
An anomalous spectacle on stage,
Eyes stare and heads nod.
What is the cost of repair?

A million dollar or a million tons of gold,
When I'm stable, I'll be able.

Disabled by Dolapo Sanusi

I may be crippled
Be blind
Deaf
Dumb
But only if I refuse
To let my mind travel
Widen the horizon of my thoughts
Only then
Am I
Disabled

ROBBED OF MY SIGHT by Oyekunle Ifeoluwa

The sky bled knowing my lonely fate
and she groaned with nothing else to say.
My soul wept for my world seems so dark;
I have been robbed of my precious sight.

I live each day depending on sticks,

and I couldn't play with other kids.

Darkness alone was my only friend;

Sadness alone was my only peer.

I hear voices but I see no one,

I heard the curse me, "the evil one."

I closed my ears but my heart betrayed,

My eyes shed tears just to ease the pain.

If only I could be born again;

If only they understand my pain.

© iPod

MY MOUTH HAS NO ANGELS by Osalam Wosu

Because the sun is hiding in its lovers bed

I will join these broken men

to seek refuge in the bottom of green bottles

I will make this radio a time machine

and sneak away to worlds not broken in tears.

because the moon moans in mourning

I will brood on melodies yet unsung

for to proclaim and sing i do long

But the melodies have hidden

in my throat defying my bidding.

Because the words have parted with me
I will drown in the name of a mute
Because my mouth has no angels
My heaven wears the semblance of hells.

YOUR BLINDNESS I MOURN by **Hussani Abdulrahim**

How do you watch the wind intoxicate leaves?
How do you learn the rowdy scene of a million bees?
How do you tell the patches in a dying sky?
How do you smell the tints of flowers stretching high?

How do you grope in this darkly lit world
Searching for shoulders and pillars to hold?
You only learn smiles tossed and foiled,
Become pungent tears of horrors untold.

So, I rip my heart, I give you the world,
Into its vastness, your misery fold;
I give you the sea- your sorrows drown;
I gift you the sky- your anguish flown.

It's your infirmity that should be mourned,
Not this broken body beheld and scorned.

SANCTIMONIOUS BIGOTRY by **Adekitan Adedolapo Isaac**

A land sidoned in mystical and ancient past,

Revolving ball of humanity and caring sanctuary,
Geocentrically orbiting the earth, rotationally.

The globe continues, spinning on its axis,
In a world of self-righteous, duplicity and perfection,
The latest teabag; the unseanality of the weather,
Designed to show simplicity of character.

Underthreshold competition, purposely guised,
Survivalism ensues, differentiation proceeds,
With denial vigorously refuted,
With epitaph, against proportionality.

The globe continues, spinning on its axis,
Autonomosity will never be, without character's familiarity,
Species' propagation, potential and superiority

My Disability an Ability by Isiaq Rafiat Olabolakale

If having disability will make me liability
Then I say mine was meant to be an ability
I appear a rock on the outside but,
Behold a treasure within
You shall not know till you see through me
For beauty can be only in the eyes of the beholder
Many will jeer me
This will weaken me not
Beyond is the strength of will that propel me
You have been swayed by world flattery
A victim of such I am not
Difference encompassed around me is a chosen weapon
Of which shall be used for victory of my want
This what I live for, an ability in disability.

Why me? By Ayuba Muhyideen Kolawole

My days and moons have passed by me
Counting on me the day I will try
To create my world with words by wall
And have my life controlled like a ball
The climax had started since when am young
They called me yin yet I deserve yang
Must they right? Have never win a trophy
Is it my ignorance that compose not a strophe
Or in tug of war that I fall over line?
Dangling around arena like a drunker of wine
Is it to woo that I wu like a born-of-milk?
I think am gentle why called me meek
To speak is crime and crime is death
For sure, behind disability there is possibility

Blind by Samuel Oladele

The world in my eyes is a void planet.

No sun, moon or stars.

Just darkness, the alien occupant
and the boundless burden of this body.

The world in here is a touch of warm hands,
a smell of fresh flowers in spring,
a taste of jam smeared on soft bread,
and a sound of a thunderous rain echoing.

This darkness in my eyes is a thousand bricks
I'm hauling forever into the stretch of eternity.

Monologue Of A Soul From Hell by Whyte Daniel

(I am among the souls of teeming millions

Crushed by their inadhesion;

By blitzkriegs from these belligerent parties.)

My soul, in evanescence, waves to my daring body

Whose hope of ever beaming has been dumped in

The smelly dung on this raped land.
The earth does not heed the faint call of my hoe,
When even my hand cannot disseminate orders;
My penis, too, does not fill the mouth of my nagging wife.
My defiled bed, a cockroach finds and rallies me,
I'm down to wrestle him. But there, again, he brags
As I fall on my back, not him.

HEALING A BOY'S WING by Onis Sampson

That there, tear-smear'd in the broken portrait,
Was me, a little boy, your little boy of yore.

So much dark clouds around my wheelchair
So much rust that woke a tsunami of stony tears.

This here, is me, your big boy of now
Echoing the unyielding stance of Mandela.

I sing to you from the belly of city stars.
On fire, my dreams today cannot be hemmed

By legs in absentia. As birds' wings

Healed by God, I rise

And with me, murmurations of dreams

Too stubborn for desert heat

And with me, laughter, and a healed wing stuffed

With dreams rising in the face of legs in absentia.

THIS ABILITY by AGBETILOYE ADEKUNLE

Through the way of mothers,

you arrived like others.

You are seen as nature's mistake,

but i see you as nature's big stake.

Always singled out

like a roach between hawks.

Always at the receiving end of demean pecks

from innumerable vicious beaks.

Tell their Eris you are the fairest,

for you have in you

a Steve who does wonders,

and a cob who harms ills.

You can rule cities

if only you understand your ability.

JUDGE'S DESK

All poems received are fascinating which makes it such a herculean task to decide a winning piece in a pool of brilliant pieces. In fact, each and every poet that contested has a forte in poetry.

While describing emotional ills, some poets fail to establish a proper correlation between feelings (of the disabled) and his or her disability and this among other few factors deprives them a place atop. However, this is not indicative of weakness on any scale.

BIO

Dauda Onawola is an independent poetry publisher, the sole administrator of Wonder Nation Poetry. He writes majorly on the difference between the ancient societies and the modern world, hope for the ill-born and his ambient situation. He also has a deep affection for strange/weird natural phenomena.

REVIEW OF WINNING PIECE: UN-ABLE

by **Benjamin Harlett Bamidele**

The poem: An intentional 'delete punctuation' poem. Non-obscure and in third person format.

Setting: Seaside (of any decent). Any season. Any era.

Character: Girl Teenager (of any decent), feeling bit deserted.

Mood: Melancholic/sad

Literary devices: Personification - 'waves beckon', 'Trapped by the chair'

Flashback

Enjambment

Synecdoche: 'nimble with both feet'

Imagery - 'Pestle of her feet'

Metaphor - 'Pestle of her feet', 'Pebble with the mind'

Body:

Stanza 1: There's a frame on her eyes through which she looks (sight aid 'eye glasses', maybe can't see well) through her room window to see the beauty of sea scape (Ocean View) that she loves so much. She flashes back at when she used to be wild playing at the shore 'nimble' and could walk 'with both limbs'... Pounding the sand... With the metaphoric '*Pestle of her feet*' jumping and happy. Sad, now she can't pick steps with her feet, select 'pebbles' and throw across the body of water (sea's skin) to listen to the drop-sound or take a walk around the shore.

Stanza 2. Back from the flashback (still at the window sill), she's been crippled (on her wheelchair). All she does is draw up the mental picture of the activity 'with her mind'. Even if the mind could cast the stone, it'd be to places she'd never step again. The pebble (with her mind) could also be a 'metaphoric' *wish of ever walking again*.... She can't be sure if that's attainable, for the wish is shattered to 'places' unreachable.

Meet Benjamin Harlett Bamidele

Black brain, black vein. No 'world' is perfect but much more than being boring and frustrating. Except that I create worlds of my own - create fun from all situations. People relate it to 'attitude', but it's more than it. It's not just adjusting, it's adjusting to adjustments: Learn from the elderly and share with children; gather in the day and sum at night; noisy and rusty but not without calmness. Elegant as a proud pro.

Afro Cabin

TURNING YOUR TALENT INTO A CAREER

You know you are on a right track, when you discover the treasure that's hidden deep in the corners of your inner you. Often times we lose ourselves before even discovering who we are and what we are capable of doing. Self-limitation and procrastination is what holds us back from exploring every river we carry in us. Sometimes we even choose not to listen to that twitching voice that rings in our heads to give us a hint on that hidden package we possess. Discovery of oneself is a battle that's only won by people who battle it out and find a way to break through the tinder box; it's a battle that's only won by people who dare to rip their heads apart just to have a glimpse of castles they own.

Arguably—every person has been given something to bring on earth. This is so true and spot on. Excuses aren't acceptable to justify the fact that people are short of things to do because they have nothing to do and aren't blessed with special inborn-gifts like talent. Many are just struggling to find what they possess in them.



Once you discover who you are and get to know yourself a lot more better you will overcome anything in life, it's a bridge that takes you to greater things and more discoveries. Well; if you are struggling to get to know what you are blessed with, the talent that you possess, keep calm, don't go hard on yourself, just take time and try out different stuff, and then you will be able to discover who you are. It may take time to find out, months, years or even decades, it's a process that

gradually erects to the surface for you to be able to notice it. Just like a student who is always doodling cartoons or drawings in the middle of a lecture, you will also realize that there are certain things that draw your whole attention when you are lost in your thoughts, that's the picture we are talking about, don't hesitate nor keep on staring at it, approach it barebreasted and see how the painting will come out.

See, it's all about dipping brushes in various colours of ink and seeing which brush stroke looks fine, do it every day, (everyday) every day, till you get to know the treasure you carry. Of course it's not an easy task, you'll surely come across hills and valleys along the way, but if you are passionate about discovering yourself; you got to stay firm on the ground, you got to run through the storm and make it out alive. Okay, so—you have finally discovered your talent, what next? What have you decided to do with it? What are your plans? Are you going to use your brushes or dump them? Are you going to use your pencil for a prominent purpose or will you let its nib become blunt? Well, if you have chosen to hang it, good for you, congratulations. If you've chosen to continue with your talent; congratulations too, but what will you make out of that talent? What will you use it for? Are you going to keep on filming your dance moves to entertain people? Are you going to keep on painting just to mesmerize people who love paintings? If this is what you've sculptured in your mind then you got to wrap that talent neatly and take it back where you found it. Yeah, I mean, what's the point of having something that won't give back for every effort you put in and the passion you trickle in it.

Yeah, you found out that you are a good designer? Will you start making designs for you alone or will you take them out there for people to see. Well it's up to you to break the glass ceiling. Ever heard of that small girl who spent most of her time playing with a doll? She would get pieces of linen and wrap her doll with them, she did this over and over again, and as she grew up she started knitting them to make garments for the doll. Guess what? She's now an accomplished designer and entrepreneur, and do you know the funny part about all this? She abashed the idea of going to university, just like *Tumblr kajillionaire David Karp* who dropped out of high school at 14 because his mom suggested he should focus on computers. Life lesson huh? Or just like sweet *Coco Chanel* who left school at 18 to become one of the world's most famous fashion designers, 'WOW!' You can read that again.



Credits: *WebIndia123*

See? The bottom line here; is believing in yourself and knowing that you can turn your talent into a career, just like *APPLE CEO and founder; Steve Jobs* who dropped out of *Reed College* to become father of all things. Hmm Alrighty! So, Here's a boy who is always dazed by paintings, he loves to paint too. He is a Picasso of his own, no time for drama or whatsoever. He's always putting brush strokes on every piece he finds. But unfortunately, he paints for people to see, he doesn't know that he already has a career in his palms—and what will happen to him next? He will go nowhere and will keep on receiving compliments and no pay at all, which isn't good for his health 'cause he has more than what it takes to earn a living through his art.

It's the same situation with that fellow who is always typing, writing stuff that goes nowhere. Honestly, that's madness at the highest pulse rate; it's simply a denial of self-inspired success. We know you're a good writer, but if you don't get your work out there, you're as good as a prune, period.



Stop making excuses when what you want is already in your palms, get out there and turn your writing skills into a career, do it and don't stop doing it.



We recently had a chat with Emmanuel Phiri, a young Zambian graphic designer.

Yes he is young and energetic—vibrant and skilful, still growing with the art though. He's always playing around with visuals that capture the sights of many viewers. Brilliant, right? Of course it is. Graphic designing is one creative art that can take you places, nail it down very well, and you'll automatically attract more clients and get to generate an income. Is it really necessary to grab a degree for it? I don't think so, probably if you wish to add more glory to your CV.

But hey, isn't a portfolio not enough to convince a client that you have all the art tacked around you? You can use that visual artistry and creativity to design images of all types. Your creativity will surely see you working in an Ad agency, marketing company, fashion house or other place where graphics needed to be generated continually. Young and driven, Emmanuel knows exactly what to do with his talent, always shooting up to the skies and using his creativity to generate income. Come on, you can do that too. When asked about how his creativity is making him build a career out of it, his response was that graphic designing isn't just a creative talent that earns you money but something you can always look up to as a career and he was going to use his creativity to build a career and make a living out of it, Hmm...what a genius. So; basically, there are many creative talents that can be turned into careers without even struggling much with educational stress.



If you feel like you can make good coffee, or cook the best meals on the planet, why not try to set yourself a spot that will make people buy your products; and by

the time you realize that your sales are shooting up, you would have already found out that you've actually created a career out of your creative talent.

Just explore and get to know yourself better. Discover who you are and what you carry within you. Whether you're agile with a camera or can write like Maya Angelou, you can turn that talent into a career. Don't worry about how bumpy the road will be, just like any other dream chaser, develop discipline and know where to dross your feet or else you might find yourself sinking deep in the mud. If you truly believe in yourself, you can surely turn your talent into a career, it's just the matter of being creative and innovative. Try it out and see how high you will fly. Ciao!

[Chanda Chongo](#) (aka Rabbit) is a 20 year old writer and blogger hailing from Zambia's tourist capital, Livingstone. He's an Afro-Culture activist and peace advocate trying to bring the world closer to Africa. More of his works can be found on his blog [AFROCABIN](#).

FEATURE

The Shifting Dynamics of the Spoken Word Movement in Nigeria

by **Onis Sampson**

A young man walks up to the microphone stand. He clasps his two hands together, lights up a *green* smile and speaks into the microphone as he waves a hand at the audience, "Hello, good evening everybody. Tonight I'll do a pretty short piece titled, 'Love sits in the Basket.'" He goes on to introduce himself to the audience before he begins. There is tranquility in the air and every one listens as he delivers his poem, watching his every move, calculated gesticulations and well-timed pauses. Each time he delivers a punch line; there is applause or sometimes a laugh and so on. When he is done, the audience gives him a resounding ovation.

Spoken Word poetry in Nigeria is gradually coming of age with audiences beginning to appreciate it as a unique form of art. It is an art form common amongst young poets. Sage Hasson is said to have started the art form in Nigeria sometime in early 2000. Down the years the likes of Doyin Ogunnaike (Donnak), Obi E, Tope Sadiq, Efe Paul Azino and several others have played crucial roles in the spoken word movement in Nigeria. The form is not only unique to Nigeria in Africa. Other African countries are beginning to experience a surge of interest in the form.

A lot has been written about spoken word poetry in Nigeria, chronicling those who are said to have started the form, those who popularised it, and those making waves. One of the sites that say much about this form is EGCreativity. In fact it conducts online polls where it lists out the popular spoken word poets in Nigeria for a given year.

Spoken word poetry as a poetic form which involves oral delivery cannot exist without events or fora where its practitioners deliver their poems to the public. In contemporary Nigeria today, the form is on an upswing, growing and getting bigger in the passage of time. Some big time promoters and practitioners of the form usually organize events to celebrate spoken word poetry in higher institutions, writers' groups and several other places. Some notable events organized in 2015 in this regard include Poetic Blaze at the University of Ibadan; Uniben Literary Festival at the University of Benin; Words on Rampage organized by Adetimilehin Vic'Adex at Ladoke Akintola University (popularly known as LAUTECH) and several others.

Because the form involves oral delivery of poems which have been previously written, rather than absolute dependence on book form publication in exclusion of audio or video mediums, Nigerian poets have taken to releasing their spoken word works to the public in audio or video forms. In most cases the poems are segmented as you have in music VCD's or DVD's and then released as albums. In this case you can't call them music albums. A better descriptive phrase would be spoken word album. A quintessence that comes to mind is "Black" by Arc Angel, a popular spoken word poet in Nigeria.

Spoken Word poetry is being popularised in Nigeria through various strategies and means. One of such is organizing of competitions. There is the Abuja Literary Society Slam, Eko Poetry Slam and several others.

In terms of promotion of spoken word poetry events in Nigeria there are certain popular figures that have done much. Enigmatic Olumide is one of such figures here. In the early stages of the development of the form major cities like Abuja and Lagos were places where events were mostly held. Olumide is said to have pioneered the organizing of spoken word events in a place like Ibadan. He organized the BBPoetry.

We shall take a cursory look at some leading spoken word poets in contemporary Nigeria. It is important giving credence to what they have done in the form in Nigeria both in terms of their artistic and creative works and performances, and their efforts in organizing events.

1.) **Efe Paul Azino:** Here is one gifted spoken word poet who also enjoys much popularity amongst spoken word devotees within and outside the country. He is credited as being the first person to produce a spoken word theatre production in Nigeria. The production, *Finding Home* which was organized in 2014 was well received. It considered critical themes such as the issues of displacement faced by Africans in the diaspora; those who grappled with the issues of morality and conscience, the fight for survival in the face of dire compromise.

Azino's poems flow with poignancy as revealed in several of his pieces. They deal with politics, castigating the societal malaise and rot redolent of a society that seems to celebrate such. In "Justice has been Kidnapped" he condemns the now commonplace travesty of justice in the land in election petition matters where a Judge gives his judgement without recourse to justice, a clear instance of sham. In the poem he categorically states that although the electorates and the people at large know the votes were fake and "phantom" yet the "marauders" were declared the winners. The poem goes through the gamut of past political failures, decrying a perennial absence of justice in Nigeria. Allusions to the 1st Republic, Oloibiri, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu and several others are well contained in the poem with distressing effect on the reader who gets to condemn the sordid state of things in the country.

It is worthy of note saying that poems of social importance, and protest have long been in existence in Nigeria, particularly under military regimes. Niyi

Osundare is one of such well established Nigerian poets whose poems lambasted military dictatorship in Nigeria and by extension in some of his works, a similar situation in parts of the African continent.

- 2.) **Elizabeth Ayoola:** This is another spoken word poet worthy of mention. Although she was born in the UK, moved to the US at the age of seven where she had much of her education before coming back to Nigeria for her NYSC, she was able to fit into a prestigious poetry slam like the Eko Poetry Slam where she came second. She was one of the guests at the Lagos International Poetry Festival alongside such popular literary figures like Dami Ajayi, Akeem Lasisi, Sage Hasson and several others.
- 3.) **Graciano Enwerem:** He is listed on EGCreativity.com's ranking of top fifty (50) poets as the number one poetry promoter who rocked Nigeria in 2015. In his spoken word piece, "12 Million Nonsense" he condemns corruption in Nigeria. In same piece he decries the death of youths and numberless instances of an abysmal state of things in Nigeria. The piece is mainly addressed to politicians in the country. Like most spoken word poems where end rhymes are popular features, "12 Million Nonsense" is replete with end rhymes.
- 4.) **Dike Chukwumerije:** A well known spoken word poet and promoter of poetry in Nigeria. Some of his popular pieces include "The Revolution has no Politics", "Belly Politics", and "Okwesilieze". In the Revolution he made a case against poverty, making such statements as "Do you not know that poverty is not an Ijaw man?" Allusions to Ishan, Nekede, Modakeke run through the work. A basic figurative expression in the poem is rhetorical question which the poet employs to pass home his message. The piece is a social commentary on the happenings in the Nigerian society. He employs images such as iroko, and obeche in the poem which are common trees in parts of Nigeria.

In "Belly Politics" the poet deals with the candidacy of certain political aspirants. It is representative of contemporary Nigeria where politicians make speeches, making so many promises to the masses without fulfilling them. In the poem the group of aspirants mentioned as unlikely candidates for victory

were those not ready to compromise. The candidates likely to win were those who were ready to “shake a hand there, and shake a leg there”, depictive of those ready to bribe their way into political office.

It is clear from the poetry of Chukwumerije, and even that of Enwerem that these are works of social commentary.

Spoken word poetry has come to stay in Nigeria. The challenge of funding that was there during the years of its inception is gradually fading off. People are beginning to embrace it as a unique and interesting genre. Here is one movement here to redefine our artistic sensibilities as a people.

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Power of Positive Minds

Take it Back to the Foundation

We are at certain times faced with challenges that are beyond our own abilities. For most it sinks into the mind as a nightmare and hope for the betterment of situations is lost instantly. By no means ever should problems be the cause for our decisions, rather have decisions come as a result weighed options.

It is not all problems that we will solve by finding solutions. Some are greater problems that need to be figured out and the root cause taken care of. They are like trees that spread their roots and head towards a building. The next thing we know is the building walls start cracking when the roots force themselves into it. If not dealt with in time, the cracking will persist until the wall gets weak and finally crumbles down.

This is not a fault you can do away by applying crack filler. The best option is to look at where the crack is emanating from, and then get to learn what is causing it. Therefore, in such circumstances you can tell that this certain crack is beyond crack filler. It is that kind of crack you will need to dig the ground, deal with the destructive roots (that means kill them) and repair the crack thereafter.

The very same problems we are facing today as individuals, communities, nations or even as a continent are figuratively cracks on a building. Instead of finding immediate solutions, we need to study our challenges and determine where it starts from. Then we can tell whether it is a crack filler situation or we need to dig down to reach the main cause.

Some situations are not meant for trial and error but serious scrutiny. The more we waste time on immediate or temporary solutions we leave the rest of the building subject to destruction. Why?

The moment we make small repairs to a huge break, the damage is obviously going to expand. The disadvantage is the further destruction will not be visible but still continues. At the end of the day when the temporary solution wears out the problem would have grown into a major threat.

Therefore, it is ideal to deal with a problem before it spreads like a veld fire.

Steps to follow

1. Identify and Understand your problem

2. Identify the origin of the problem
3. Identify and deal with the root cause
4. Devise solutions for the problem.

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Smart Home Owner

How to Take Care of Your Pots & Pans by YakekponoAbasi Adams



Pots and pans are my best kitchen utensils; have you ever wondered what life would have been without them? From cooking the food to holding the food, they're extremely useful. How can you take care of your pots and pans to prevent them from turning ugly, but remain ever sparkling and even last longer? Read on!

- After buying a pot or pan, wash it with hot water before use, leave to dry and rub a small amount of cooking oil on the inside to prevent food stains as much as possible.
- Never heat a pot or pan when it is empty. Always put oil or water inside before heating it.
- Ensure you use the right burner size for the pot.
- Never remove burnt food from a pot or pan by scraping with iron sponge; this makes it easier for future food burn. The best thing to do is to pour enough water inside the pot to cover the burn, add liquid soap, boil, allow it to cool and then wash the pot.
- Wash the inside of your pots and pans with a soft sponge, and use the iron sponge for the outer part.
- Use wooden or silicone spoons and other utensils to avoid scratching of your pots and pans.

- Avoid stacking coated pots and pans atop each other, rather hang on hooks or lay them on their sides, to avoid them from getting scratched.

*Chief Editor of Youth Shades Magazine, **YakekponoAbasi Adams** is haunted by the words she does not write, and writing is the other thing that keeps her sane. Fondly known as Yakky, she watches serial movies or reads books when she is not airing on **Youth Shades TV**.*

Hall of Fame

Mary Slessor



Her mother was a devout Presbyterian who read each issue of the *Missionary Record*, a monthly magazine published by The United Presbyterian Church (later the United Free Church of Scotland) to inform members of missionary activities and needs. Slessor developed an interest in religion and, when a mission was instituted in Quarry Pend (close by the Wishart Church), she wanted to teach. Slessor was 27 when she heard that David Livingstone, the famous missionary and explorer, had died, and decided she wanted to follow in his footsteps.

Early missionary career

Eventually, Slessor applied to the United Presbyterian Church's Foreign Mission Board. After training in Edinburgh, she set sail in the SS *Ethiopia* on 5 August 1876, and arrived at her destination in West Africa just over a month later.

Slessor, 28 years of age, red haired with bright blue eyes, was first assigned to the Calabar region in the land of Efik people. She was warned that the Efik people there believed in traditional West African religion and had superstitions in relation to women giving birth to twins. Slessor lived in the missionary compound for 3 years, working first in the missions in Old Town and Creek Town. She wanted to go deeper into Calabar, but she contracted malaria and was forced to return to Scotland to recover. She left Calabar for Dundee in 1879. After 16 months in Scotland, Slessor returned to Calabar, but not to the same compound. Her new assignment was three miles farther into Calabar, in Old Town. Since Slessor assigned a large portion of her salary to support her mother and sisters in Scotland, she economised by learning to eat the native food.



Mary Slessor with adopted children Jean, Alice, Maggie and May. Image taken in Scotland

Issues Slessor confronted as a young missionary included the lack of Western education, as well as widespread human sacrifice at the death of a village

elder, who, it was believed, required servants and retainers to accompany him into the next world.

The birth of twins was considered a particularly evil curse. Natives feared that the father of one of the infants was an evil spirit, and that the mother had been guilty of a great sin. Unable to determine which twin was fathered by the evil spirit, the natives often abandoned both babies in the bush. Slessor adopted every child she found abandoned, and sent out twin missionaries to find, protect and care for them at the Mission House. Some mission compounds were alive with babies. Slessor once saved a pair of twins, a boy and a girl, but the boy did not survive. Mary took the girl as her daughter and called her Janie.

According to WP Livingstone, when two deputies went out to inspect the Mission in 1881–82, they were much impressed. They stated, "*...she enjoys the unreserved friendship and confidence of the people, and has much influence over them.*" This they attributed partly to the singular ease with which Slessor spoke the language.

After only three more years, Slessor returned to Scotland on yet another health furlough. This time, she took Janie with her. During the next 3 years, Slessor looked after her mother and sister (who had also fallen ill), raised Janie, and spoke at many churches, sharing stories from Calabar.

After this hiatus, Slessor returned to Calabar. She saved hundreds of twins out of the bush, where they had been left either to starve to death or be eaten by animals. She helped heal the sick and stopped the practice of determining guilt by making the suspects drink poison. As a missionary, she went to other tribes, spreading the word of Jesus Christ.

During this third mission to Calabar, Slessor received news that her mother and sister had died. She was overcome with loneliness, writing, "There is no one to write and tell my stories and nonsense to." She had also found a sense of independence, writing, "*Heaven is now nearer to me than Britain, and no one will worry about me if I go up country.*"

Slessor was a driving force behind the establishment of the Hope Waddell Training Institute in Calabar, which provided practical vocational training to Efiks. The superstitious threat against twins was not only in Calabar; but also spread to a town Arochukwu on the far west of Calabar. There is a high school named in honor of Mary Slessor. This is located in Arochukwu, a town west of Calabar, about three half hours drive away. The people of Calabar are Efik tribe though the

popular Arochukwu town is in Ibo tribe. Both Calabar and Arochukwu share some common cultures and are in southeastern Nigeria, in Cross River State and Abia State respectively.

Among the Okoyong and Efik

In August 1888, Slessor traveled north to Okoyong, an area where previous male missionaries had been killed. She thought that her teachings, and the fact that she was a woman, would be less threatening to unreached tribes. For 15 years, Slessor lived with the Okoyong and Efik people. She learned to speak Efik, the native language, and made close personal friendships wherever she went, becoming known for her pragmatism and humour. Slessor lived a simple life in a traditional house with Efiks. Her insistence on lone stations often led Slessor into



Pots in which twin babies were exposed to die.

conflict with the authorities and gained her a reputation for eccentricity. However, her exploits were heralded in Britain and she became known as the "white queen of Okoyong". Slessor continued her focus on evangelism, settling disputes, encouraging trade, establishing social changes and introducing Western education.

It was the belief in Calabar that if a woman had twins, one of them had to be a devil so the twins were left in the jungle in clay pots to die. Mary Slessor successfully fought against the practice of killing twins at infancy.

In 1892, Slessor became vice-consul in Okoyong, presiding over the native court. In 1905 she was named vice-president of Ikot Obong native court. In 1913 she was awarded the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Slessor suffered failing health in her later years but remained in Calabar, where she died in 1915.

Death



Memorial plaque on Mary Slessor's grave at Calabar, eastern Nigeria, in 1981

For the last four decades of her life, Slessor suffered intermittent fevers from the malaria she contracted during her first station to Calabar. However, she downplayed the personal costs, and never gave up her mission work to return permanently to Scotland. The fevers eventually weakened Slessor to the point where she could no longer walk long distances in the rainforest, but had to be

pushed along in a hand-cart. In early January 1915, while at her remote station near Use Ikot Oku, she suffered a particularly severe fever. Slessor died on 13 January 1915.

Her body was transported down the Cross River to Duke Town for the colonial equivalent of a state funeral. A Union Jack covered her coffin. Attendees included the Provincial Commissioner, along with other senior British officials in full uniform. Flags at government buildings were flown at half mast. Nigeria's Governor-General, Sir Frederick Lugard, telegraphed his "deepest regret" from Lagos and published a warm tribute in the Government Gazette.

Honours

Mary Slessor was honoured in 2009 by Clydesdale Bank for their World Heritage Series and Famous Scots Series. She was featured on the back of the bank's £10 note, highlighting her work in Calabar (Nigeria). The note also features a map of the area she worked in Calabar, a lithographic vignette depicting her work with children, and a sailing ship emblem.^[10]

Slessor's work in Okoyong earned her the Efik nickname of *Obongawan Okoyong* (Queen of Okoyong). This name is still used commonly to refer to her in present-day Calabar.

Several memorials in and around the Efik provinces of Calabar and Okoyong testify to the value placed on her work. Some of these include:

- Mary Slessor Road in Calabar
- Mary Slessor Roundabout
- Mary Slessor Church
- Statues of her (usually carrying twins) at various locations in Calabar
- Main-belt asteroid 4793 Slessor (1988 RR4)^[11] named after her to mark the centenary celebrations on 13 January 2015.

A girl's house, "Slessor House", was named after Mary Slessor in Achimota School, Ghana. A female hostel in the University of Nigeria Nsukka is named Mary Slessor Hall in honour of Mary Slessor. A bust of Slessor is now in the Hall of Heroes of the National Wallace Monument in Stirling.

Life's Corner

CHILD MARRIAGE

Taghride, a 15-year-old-girl from Syria wrote, "The man who I am going to marry is so ugly. He is fat and looks older than my father. I can't stand the thought that he is going to touch me, that he will be my husband. I often cry and beg my mother and father not to force me. This ring that he has given me, I want to tear it off all the time. Every time I touch it, I think about how my life is going to be over. I stopped going to school in sixth grade because of the war. They bombed my school, and we moved. I've never returned to a classroom, but I miss everything about it. I can only think how unfair it is -- I've never asked for much in my life. I want there to be food on the table and I want to be able to go to school. But not even that is possible. I need someone who can save me from my family." This is the cry of a 15 years old bride from Syria.

Unfortunately, there are many 'Taghrides' all over the globe crying for help from their families. Each year, 15 million girls are married off before the age of 18; that's 28 girls every minute! And child marriage is so steeped in certain cultures, it's woefully unbelievable. The highest rates of child marriage by country are observed in Sub-Saharan Africa, in countries such as Niger, the Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Somalia, Nigeria, Mauritania, Guinea and Burkina Faso. However, the largest number of child brides lives in South Asia, where 46 percent of girls are married before the age of 18. India is no exception and Bangladesh is noted to be the leading country with the highest number of child brides.

Child marriage can be simply defined as marriage before the age of 18 and this is recognized in international legal instruments to be a violation of the child's human rights. Both girls and boys suffer this inhumane act, just that the case is recorded more for the female sex. Hence this article will be skewed towards girl child marriage.

CAUSES OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Poverty is the main cause of child marriage. Where poverty is acute, some families believe marrying off their child is the ideal solution to secure their future; their

one-way ticket out of luck. This is very common in India where parents give their girl child away to rich old men who can take care of their needs, without taking into consideration the child's own needs and welfare. At least, the family's expenses will be slashed too because there is one less person to be fed, clothed and educated; what do they lose? In Afghanistan, girls are given away for marriage as a way of repaying family debts. A whole human being will be reduced to the level of a gift for atonement and reparation. It's a pity!

Traditional beliefs too have been an ancient, ever present cause of child marriage. In some communities, when girls start to menstruate, they are seen to have reached womanhood and ripe for marriage. Parents in Niger believe child marriage is a way of preserving the virginity of the girl child so that she will not bring dishonor to the family by getting pregnant out of wedlock. So is Bangladesh where child marriage is seen as a safer way of protecting girls against sexual molestation from unmarried men. In Pakistan, there is a tradition of arranging marriages of very closely related children, normally first-cousins, even at the time of their birth. Moreover, most traditional homes see investing in their sons' education as more worthwhile than doing same for the girl child who is seen to be only good for the kitchen and *the other room*.

EFFECTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Most importantly, it is an infringement on the human rights of the child. Child marriage victims are deprived of their fundamental rights to health, education and safety. Most of them are forced to stop schooling so that they can be married off to assume home building responsibilities. Education, which is a right of this child, is in this case snatched from her. Her right to safety gets curtailed because most often she gets maltreated by the other wives of her elderly husband. There is not even proper health care for her when she gets pregnant.

Secondly, child marriage psychologically affects the children because they are not emotionally ready to become wives and mothers. Most of these underage brides are unaware and not prepared for any of the emotional attachments that come with sex and giving birth. How well can a child cater for another child? This simply overwhelms them and psychologically affects their relations with others. Some

become isolated, extremely distant and unwilling to associate with others. Slowly, their soul dies along with their bodies.

Child mothers are at a greater risk of experiencing dangerous complications in pregnancy and childbirth such as developing obstetric fistula, contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Because the child may not have a well-developed pelvis as at the time of childbirth, it may rupture when she contracts to push the baby out. It is sad to see some of these brides suffer all kinds of complications (like fistula) out of childbirth, and be left alone to die with no one to help them. Some are then referred to as witches and ostracized from society. Most end up migrating to other countries to engage in roadside begging.

Furthermore, child marriage limits the future prospects of the girl child. Someone who could have grown to become the next prime minister, governor or teacher is left in the callous hands of one old, wizened soul to be maltreated and destroyed. One thing we have to know is that the impact of child marriage affects the community and the nation at large. Systems that undervalue the contribution and participation of girls and women limit their own possibilities for growth, stability and transformation because they make up the majority of the populace.

HOW TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

Ending child marriage requires action at many levels. Existing laws against child marriage should be enforced, especially when girls at risk of child marriage, or who are already married, seek protection and justice. There must be stringent punishments for families caught in giving their younger ones out for marriage.

Practices people deem culturally acceptable are unlikely to disappear through legislation alone hence there must be education on the negative effects of child marriage. Seminars and door to door awareness must be undertaken to enlighten these uneducated people who do not see anything wrong with child marriage to have second thought about it.

Governments, civil society and other development partners must work together to ensure girls have access to education, health information and services, and life-skills training. Schooling curbs the rate at which child marriage occurs. It empowers women to look beyond marriage as a solution to poverty.

Importantly, girls who are already married need to be supported. They need reproductive health services to help them avoid early pregnancy. Those who become pregnant need access to appropriate care throughout pregnancy and childbirth. They should also be supported, if they choose, in returning to formal or non-formal school.

CONCLUSION

It is important that children are recognized by the law as being children and accorded full protection from anything that harms their wellbeing. No society can afford the lost opportunity, waste of talent, or personal exploitation that child marriage causes. It is too grave a cost to lose the girl child to an early marriage that infringes on her rights, negatively affects her psychologically, emotionally, medically and socially. Children need the love of their parents not the inappropriately amorous love of old husbands.

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Health Tips with Dr. Frank

ARE YOU SUFFERING FROM POOR ERECTION? YOU NEED TO READ THIS!

"Is that it?!!!" Those are the three most annoying words to a man after sex. A man's nightmare! There's nothing better than great sex. Everyone agree to that except some don't enjoy sex as they ought to. Sex is very important to a man. So a man's world could virtually come to an end if he cannot perform well in the bedroom.

The wife is not satisfied, he is not satisfied. He simply cannot sustain an erect penis for up to at least two minutes in order to thrust into and out of a woman's vagina; or he ejaculates even before his penis enters the vagina; or he does not get an early morning hard on; or cannot sustain an erection during masturbation; or he has little or no urge to have sex. These conditions affect more men than the recorded number.

Erectile dysfunction or impotence is inability to sustain an erect penis for up to two minutes during sex or during masturbation or lack of an early morning erection of the penis. Premature ejaculation refers to an ejaculation which occurs even before the penis enters the vagina or an ejaculation which occurs before two minutes. Low libido is a reduced urge or desire to have sex. It is one of the most common reasons healthy middle aged and elderly men present to the hospital. It is the most common sexual disorder for men, affecting 30% of men, if not more, at some point in their lives.

How long should sex last for?

Research shows variety in the duration of sex across various ethnic regions. In India, the average is 2 to 3 minutes; in the Western region, it is 4 to 5 minutes; Middle East 6 to 7 minutes; and Europe 7 to 8 minutes. These differences are attributed to lifestyles and sexual beliefs.

What causes dysfunctional penile erection or ejaculation?

Generally speaking, sexual function diminishes with age. People who are diabetic; who smoke tobacco; who drink a lot of alcohol; who are obese; who drink a lot of coffee; who abuse drugs, who on a prolonged basis use medications like antihypertensives, antipsychotics, antidepressants and tranquilizers; are at greater risk of developing erectile dysfunction.

Psychological factors like stress, anxiety, fear, gloom, uncertainties, sadness, and relationship problems, also play a role; especially for those who get erection in the morning or during masturbation, but who cannot sustain it with their sexual partners.

Erectile dysfunction can be caused by three main factors.

1. Narrowed or blocked blood vessels supplying the penis
2. Reduced libido
3. Abnormalities in the nervous system that trigger erection.

Diabetes mellitus, hypertension, hormonal imbalances, atherosclerosis, multiple sclerosis, heart diseases and unhealthy lifestyles can lead to a narrowed or blockage of the blood vessels supplying the penis.

What ways can you prevent or treat this condition? Keep a date with me on the next column.

Dr. Frank, Edidiong is a connectrovert and a certified medical practitioner with a track record in research and online medical education. A graduate of University of Uyo Medical School, he is currently working on a research linking social media and sleep disturbances.

Explore

Welcome to Sibiu, Romania, where the houses have eyes.



While walking around, you'll start to notice something a bit odd. You may even get the sense that someone—or something—is watching you. While you gaze at the city's architecture, you'll start to realize the houses are staring back.

Many of the houses on the south and east sides of the city look as though they have eyes peering from their roofs. These cartoonish features give the impression that the buildings (much like Sibiu's notorious party crowd) never sleep.



Though the eyes may look like some sort of sinister Big Brother surveillance program, they're actually just oddly shaped windows. Houses use them as a cooling system for their attics. Most of the "eyes" were built between the 15th and 19th centuries.

Despite their practical purposes, some like to claim these peepers were built to instill fear in people, letting them know they were always being watched and to behave accordingly. When dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu was in power, this architectural detail felt extra disturbing to the citizens. It wasn't enough that phones were being tapped, people were being questioned, and families were blacklisted. It's as if the houses were watching their every move, too.



And now, though Ceaușescu is long gone, the eyes are still there, as they have been for centuries. Unblinking, unmoving, and always observing.

Kolawole's Write-Ups

QUOTES OF A. M. KOLAWOLE

- The best guidance to a perfect life is to study the history life of the past heroes.
- Forgiveness is the best advice to a peaceful life. Forgive people and you will find yourself among the happiest men in the world.
- People will sacrifice their life for you if you worth it, so be a good one.

“Childhood memories”

The daily early life of mine I remember
When all we think is playing with ember
In sun in moon and even with fever
But none can tell that they were not forever

Cupboard a house I hide my silence
I derved by it that the best ambiance
To leak mom's bournviter and leave in peace
I know am sure you know this piece

The memories of the days awaken ambition
Inbuilt in me while still a juvenile creation
The practice of being eloquent orator
And sitting my friends like perfect narrator

That yonder man in blue debating
Like half-burn-tree without regretting
Striked my head for nothing accounted
Thought am young and never retaliated

Childhood is sweet but sorry it's short
The best day I like, to wear a nice short

With rubber-ball in hand and a pair of shoes
And pride to my friends am cute than you

I am Ayuba Muhyideen Kolawole, the eyes of mother and mirror of father. A lover of writing, speaking and teaching to no extent. I was born in Kwara State, Ilorin and presently a student of English Language at Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

FEATURE

From Idea To Printed Pages; Essential Writing Tips by Akinsimoye Samuel Omoniyi (Da Scribe)

Having the urge to write, but not knowing how to go about it? This write up is embedded with tips to help you express your ideas from thought/dream to reality. Although, it must be stated that there are no fixed writing techniques, the reason I am not tagging this as **how to write**. The reason is simple, **how to write** is just one of the essential criteria to be dealt with by YOU, the intending writer. No one can teach another how to write; if I teach you how to write, I would be teaching you how I write – nothing is more limiting as this, it kills the originality in the intending writer – you will end up being a second me, where as you could be the FIRST YOU!

So, what must you do to ‘translate’ your dream stories to published works? There are FOUR QUESTIONS a good writer must deal with BEFORE they go into putting pen to paper. They are:

1. **WHAT?** (Ideation)
2. **WHO?** (Audience)
3. **HOW?** (Choicest Genre and Language)
4. **WHY?** (Evaluation)
- 5.

WHAT AM I WRITING?

This is the level of ideation – putting the scattered story together in the mind of the intended writer. The fact is, every published work was first an idea in the ‘head’ of the writer. This is the essential fundamental condition for writing – any writing at all. If what you have in your head is not coherent to you, then keep ruminating it until it becomes fleshed. After the idea is put together into wholeness, then the next question is due; the “WHO?”.

WHO AM I ADDRESSING?

This is the stage when the intending writer brings to mind a consideration of their intending audience. The intending writer must not fail to answer this question duly. This question seems to control every other criteria for a good writing. You have to ask yourself “Who am I writing the piece for? Who are my intended audience?” – it could be the Beginners Level (Nursery Age, below age 6), the Intermediate Level (Ages 6-10), the Junior Level (Ages 11-15), the Upper Level (Ages 16-20) or the Tertiary Level (Age 21 above). Away from the age thing, it is important to put to mind the level of the intended audience with respect to Education, Environment, Culture, Status, etc. You see it is not easy to determine the audience? So, take your time to determine your audience. Once that is settled, you are ‘done’ – the quality of your evaluation of audience determines the quality of your writing; the next tip tells more.

HOW SHOULD I WRITE?

You have got a good story, you have determined your audience, that is not just enough. It is simple, HOW here, means “what genre (style of writing) would best convey your story to your afore-determined audience?” Not all styles are good enough for all stories. You could choose to write a Play – comedy, tragedy, farce, pantomime, satire, etc. –, a Prose, a Short Story, a Poem, an Article, etc. Some stories are BEST expressed as poems. Then, if poetry is the most suitable genre to convey your story, you need to bring it down to the level of your audience. You cannot write the same way for all the above listed levels of audience (you know?). The beginners for instance, would demand more of pictured write-ups. Moreover, if it were a poem, it has to be quite lyrical and very simplified. I believe you now see how the Audience factor controls other factors.

Away from the genre, we speak of language texture. It is a major part of style. Now, let us get it straight, should you be writing the same story for all the levels of audience, would you write using the same complexity of language?

(Good! I fore-hear a “No”) Beloved reader, the so intended writer, please, **MIND YOUR LANGUAGE**. Many wonderful stories have been marred by sour inappropriate language use of some writers. Let your language suit your audience without strain. With this, you are on your way to winning awards through writing! But, one more tip – the “WHY?”.

NB: if per chance you realize the best genre/style for your story is one you do not have a good knowledge about, please, it behooves you to STUDY on that genre – DO NOT meddle with a genre you do not know about.

WHY SHOULD I WRITE THIS WAY?

This is the level of personal evaluation. Here, you are intended to see how efficiently you have addressed the above questions. If you are able to deal with these questions, then, you will yourself have this feel of satisfaction even before you start putting pen to paper. However, if otherwise, then, my dear, do not be in a haste, deal with them over again. This is because, these are the same questions people will raise about your writing if it is not well written – What does he think he has written? (failed ideation) Who does he think he is writing for? (failed audience analysis) Is this how to write? (failed style of writing).

Yes people, we are almost there; let me see your published works fleeting the stores and occupying laps and shelves! Enough of dreaming to be a writer. Good looking out to you, but then, do not forget me #winks. You want to know more about writing, further than this? *Feel free; let me read your mails via sammiejainos@yahoo.com*

Spiritual Corner

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

A mad person does not know he or she is mad because what he or she does and do looks normal to him or her. When people look at them, they think that those gazing at them rather are mad. The world is sinful and the world does not know because what the world sees and does looks normal. Utilitarianism ethics believes that, the end justifies the means. That what you do does not matter how evil it

might be, the greater good is what is important. But what is evil is evil, it does not matter what benefits it might bring at the end of the day.

The Apostle Paul gave as the reason for this attitude in Romans Chapter 1 and in verse 16 and 17 this is what he said, "16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew, then for Gentile. 17 - For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

All humans are lost in sin - it is the gospel which gives man this understanding. All humans are spiritually blind and the Holy Spirit illuminates or help and enable recipient to understand the meaning of the gospel. Humans by their own effort are unable to believe, humans have no strength to save themselves from sin. The power of the gospel counter the unbelieving attitude of a person by making the person believes through a powerful presentation of the gospel.

SALVATION - The Greek transliteration for the word salvation is *soteria* meaning deliverance, rescue, bringing safely through, keeping from harm. It is only through the gospel that one is kept safe from harm, rescued, delivered and brought safely through.

As we make a hedge way into the study of this subject, I pray the Lord Almighty enlighten your spiritual sight to see this truth so you will come out of this sickness of sin.

This is the introduction to an enjoyable study in this portion of the magazine. Hope you read next month's edition for the continuation of this subject the power of the gospel. God bless you and see you God willing next month.

***Pastor Charles Fordjour** is a passionate man for God. He has the heart for the youth as he tries to encourage and counsel them. He is a product from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. He also schooled at Great Commission Academy of Ghana and currently studying at Ghana Baptist University College (School of Theology and Ministry). **Pastor Charles** is married to Mrs. Hagar Fordjour.*

Phoenix Wording

ROUTE TO GRACE

Success like capital in Economics means different things to different people and so is the path to it. Naturally, survival is victory and just beyond survival is the other contention, this time to appear the best. To an extent, the competition to survive and that of being the best are inseparable, most times, the two occurs in unison.

Largely, ordainment holds that individually or collectively, different things are to be done to excel. This is a well exemplifiable phenomenon which man must admit. This variation is so deep that someone's path to the top leads some other person(s) to the ditch of ruins. The Yoruba people used to say "a single path doesn't lead to the market...", this fact is as salient as it is valid in this case.

A great part of the world is obsequious to money and fame; by these two, people measure success, this is a faulty but established happening. Of course, money and fame are yardsticks or criteria for weighing up success socially but not the most important or the first point of call in doing this. Money and fame took the wrong place in the human perception of success

The minion to money and fame took too little of destiny into consideration. In this light, too many drift towards a direction contrary to their own written path to glory. The 7 billion people on Earth cannot just be like Bill Gate, it's practically impossible but if individuals learn to rule their own world not the stour one that we all own, there would be a better feeling of ease in circulation not this hard urge for the illusive peak.

The hustle for the peak is the spirit of life but the strive to be somebody else a retardant to the almighty movement. It doesn't really mean everyone has to choose an entirely separate lane but the fact that uniqueness can be approached from various angles is the point I am trying to establish and this does not only empower individual pursuits, it drives the entire world forward as new grounds get to be broken often so let's move it not hold it!

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DIVERSITY

Bird for the sky, fish for water;
Train for the rail, car for the road;
The wild in the forest, the tamed all around;

Me on my lane, you on your path
So we make impact.

Separate color for each dart
Just as in their target.
Diversity in efforts
be an inevitable trend
to meet individual ends.
For a car on the rail,
For a fish in the sky
When divinity is not compromised;
It's an appreciable desperation
But for the subject
It's an end en route to the ends.
At least there would be ghastly spoils
Consciously or in oblivion
When the subject faces another fate.

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Tingles

THE MERMAID AT THE RIVERBANK

Abike !
each time i sit
by the river bank
staring into the waters
with my fingers steering her gullible fluidity
i see a mermaid in the
eyes of the waters
draped in your favourite
gown, that yellow one
that looks like the colour
of blooming daffodils
enveloping the river
with flourishing beauty
i see a mermaid with lips
pink and alluring
just like yours
i see a mermaid with shape
like yours, figure eight
i see a mermaid with eyes
as bold and inviting
as yours
tell me, could it be you ?
are you pulling a trick
on me or is it just my mind ?
could it perhaps be mere
imagination sculpted
from the hungry eyes
of loneliness ?

Abike !
they say mermaids
are often sand white
but this one is ebony
with skin just like yours

i know you are faraway
but, each time i go
to the river bank
to share my loneliness
with the waters
as i stare and steer
i keep seeing a mermaid
that comes to me
looking just like you
i melt each time
hoping she could come home
with me, but she only sits
by my side and with the
radiant eyes she looks at me
reviving my hunger the more
though she doesn't move
her lovely lips to say a word
yet, her eyes says this:
i will always be here
when you look for me
i will always come to
you by this river bank
i live inside of you
but you can't touch
or see me
i will always come to you
only at this river bank
until you can come to me,
take me home with you
i miss you more
but distance kills me
this is the best i can do
just come and
take me home

then she
vanishes into the clouds
becomes a winged wind
and flies away
leaving me in tears

of want and lack
tell me !
could it be you, Abike
or is it just my imaginations deceiving me ?

Edidiong Bassey is a Nigerian from Eket, Akwa Ibom State. He is a Lawyer, Poet, Writer and Teacher. Edidiong believes in using literature(poetry) as a medium of social engineering. He is the author of "Unbound Echoes", a collection of poems.

The Perks Of Dating A F*ckboy

F*ckboy. You've probably said or come across the word with or without knowing what it means; don't worry, I will break it down for you. **F*ckboys**, they are everywhere, you see them every day, you might even be in a relationship with one. According to Nancy Jo Sales, "*A 'f*ckboy' is a young man who sleeps with women without any intention of having a relationship with them or perhaps even walking them to the door post-sex. He's a womanizer, an especially callous one, as well as kind of a loser.*"

So, what do you get when you're dating a f*ckboy? Read on:

1. He says neither yes nor no, but replies, "don't worry about that", when you ask if he's seeing someone else.
2. He disappears for days, but resurfaces with no explanation.
3. When other guys flirt with you in front of him he seems totally okay hiding behind the veil of do-whatever-you-want-because-I'm-a-feminist, when it's actually I-don't-care-less-about-you.
4. He doesn't introduce you as his girlfriend to other girls.
5. He never wants to be seen with you in public.

6. His friends are basically all just like him. A group of fuckboys? Run.

If you spot more than two of these behaviors, he's a f*ckboy, Sis. As hard as it may be to quit, you have to. He may be a nice guy, but he's not your nice guy. Stop wasting your time blocking new relationships. He's not for you, he's toxic.

Chief Editor of Youth Shades Magazine, YakekponoAbasi Adams is haunted by the words she does not write, and writing is the other thing that keeps her sane. Fondly known as Yakky, she watches serial movies or reads books when she is not airing on Youth Shades TV.

THRONE OF ILLUMINATION with Preye S. PAUL vol. 1 (November, 2017)

HINT: *THRONE OF ILLUMINATION* is an academic platform anchored by **Preye S.P.** It is a priceless treasure that is possessed by great minds, lovers of wisdom, intelligence and knowledge. If this is not treasured by anyone, the person is in darkness. No wonder our minds need to be illumined. Such illumination of the mind is gotten through diligence and constant reading of good works. This is the goal of this platform: Exposing her esteemed readers to different spheres of life - Morally, academically, socially, et cetera. It is aimed at broadening our horizon, giving light to dark areas of one's life, so that our society will be occupied by brilliant minds, and above all, a walk of freedom from mediocre to meteoric, perennial illumination.

Tagged: **LOST OF PERENNIAL EFFECTS OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA: ANYWAY FORWARD?** By: **PREYE S. PAUL and GAGANA CLEMENT**

INTRODUCTION.

IN *THRONE OF ILLUMINATION*, we shall be talking about education. This article brings to consciousness self development through the aid of education and

the road to self actualization. However, the authors are not oblivious of the fact that education in Africa, Nigeria in particular is an eyesore. It has lost its perennial illumination and effectiveness. And as such there is no true peace in Africa. That was why the authors paid particular attention to the level it is today and to proffer lasting solutions to it. There is no doubt that Africa today is facing a multifaceted crisis, despite the heroic efforts made by several African Government and the intervention of the United Nations, many African countries remain in the shadow of this deepening crisis. The constituent elements of Africa's most recent problems have been well analyzed. A severe decline in agriculture and food production; the failure to keep pace with natural population, growth and urbanization; an increase in food importation in most countries and a disastrous fall in export commodities prices, hand in hand with a crushing debt burden which is one of the highest per capita in the developing world. Many African Government have been forced to postpone, if not forego, many developmental activities, including education and other social and cultural development programmes, with a consequent continuing vicious spiral of growing political, economic and social instability. Despite all these abnormalities, what is the place, role or goal of education? Is education still the key to sustainable development?

EDUCATION: THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

The essential value of education in the sustainability and development of the human society cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore, Africa's recovery and sustainable development will depend on many important factors including the expansion (both quantitative and qualitative) of the continent's stock of human capita through education. It was in this light that Barber Conable asserted that: "Without education, development will not occur. Only an educated people can command the skills necessary for sustainable economic growth and for a better quality of life." Consequently, the key role of education, despite the political difficulties in most African countries and vagaries of developmental theories and fashions during the past decades, is now accepted as indispensable for any effective development. All African Government were certainly convinced of this key role of education in the early years of their independence as they accordingly placed heavy emphasis on expanding educational opportunities from primary school to university in the two or three decades since their independence in spite of the fact that at the time of their independence, African nations inherited systems of education which were inadequate to meet their needs for self governance and rapid economic growth.

Despite the above stated importance of education, however, education in Africa has not been able to escape the crisis now afflicting the continent.

Therefore, it is important that the challenges of education in Africa be reassessed. What do these challenges entail?

OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA.

One Of the main challenges of education in Africa is to develop the human resources that will ensure accelerated development and modernization without compromising Africa's cultural identity. Education must expand the basic knowledge of Africans that will allow us to undertake the cultural, political and socio-economic transformation necessary to achieve development. However, in order for education to realize its key role in development, its major developmental objectives must be carried out. Firstly, education must be provided to the younger segments of African society as quickly as human and financial resources permit, with the ultimate goal of developing a comprehensive system of education at all levels and for all age groups. Secondly, emphasis must be laid upon a more equitable distribution of educational opportunities and on the reduction of existing inequalities based on sex, economic status and geographical location. Thirdly, the attainment of greater internal efficiency of the educational system, as a first step towards improving the quality of education, should be a priority in order to reduce the misuse of resources caused by students repeating classes or dropping out. Fourthly, a greater external efficiency of the educational system, through an increase in the relevance of education to the job market, is also desirable so that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to find employment. Lastly, Africa should work towards the development and maintenance of an institutional capacity to formulate and carry out educational policy to plan, analyze, manage, and evaluate education and training programmes and projects at all levels.

On the other hand, education should no longer be reviewed simply as a means of raising political and social consciousness because it is an integral component of an overall developmental effort. Thus, on the basis of the recognition that the development of a country's human resources is essential to its prosperity, growth and to the effective use of its natural resources. African Government should provide educational opportunities for all children, especially in the rural areas, to attend school and by equalizing the enrolment ratios between rural and urban children, poor and rich children, and both sexes.

Also, inefficiency is a major obstacle retarding efforts to provide universal education in Africa. It is now recognized that improvements in both external as well as internal efficiency in education enhances this sector's performance in terms of output quality. The external efficiency of an educational system is judged by the extent to which schools or training institutions provide the necessary skills for the smooth running of the economy. Or better still, the extent to which school leavers

or graduates are absorbed into the labour market, find the jobs and the earnings they deserve, and are able to use their skills in employment.

CONCLUSION.

It is obvious that we have a long way to realizing an authentic African contextualized form of education that will bring sustainable development to the continent as a whole. This is because there is a great division between what is taught in school and the real life achievement. In a sad truth, we still have the 'banking concept of education," where students only pass exams and get excellent results, whether genuinely or dubiously, but without basic skills to begin life except being employed. Consequently, we will advocate that we go back to our drawing boards, sit down and think out of the box. What would happen if there are no longer white collar jobs for graduates? What skills do people have to survive economically on their own without depending solely on Government who are deaf to the cries of the masses? Is our educational curriculum pragmatic in the African situation?

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PAUL S. PREYE is a lover of academic excellence. His intellectual agility is of great admiration. He is a patriotic Nigerian, a dual citizen of Delta and Bayelsa States of Nigeria. Precisely from Ayakoromo and Aghoro communities. He had his Philosophical studies from the prestigious University of Benin, Benin City Edo State. Currently, he is at the pen ultimate class of his Theological studies in the Catholic Major Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele-Ekpoma, Edo State (Affiliated to Urban University, Rome). He is from the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi. However, Preye has gifted hands. He is a motivational speaker and writer. He has been invited for several conventions, seminars/workshops and paper presentations in academic fora. He has to his credit, awards of excellence, articles published in international journals, magazines (including online), powerful reflections in religious bulletins and others. He has passion for volleyball and music. His philosophy of life: Proper Preparation Prevent Poor Performance.

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Word Studio

MY DIARY

On this day, a powerful foe had its grip on me. I was ill. Everything around me was dull and dark. I already had a quarrel with a friend and we are yet to speak. I picked my phone to reach out to another friend but she won't pick up. Tried another and won't go through. Every part of my body was weak but my eyes, which were still bright despite nightfall.

An option came up. I picked up my diary, flipped to page where I accounted my event for that particular day the previous year. I was startled and happy at the same time. A memory playback took over my mind as I begin to reminisce on what I have just seen.

Here are some reasons using the diary is pleasurable:

It can murder boredom: Like my brief account above, I was choked with boredom but on picking up my diary, I came across live events that got my thoughts engaged.

It keeps memories alive: My ability to remember events that have occurred around me and in person is not very efficient. Using a diary has helped a lot.

It gives credit: Sometimes, on chatting with my friends, I remind them of events past. They find it interesting and I get the credit for it.

It bestows responsibility: At the end of each day, you will need to write something down about yourself; therefore you have a responsibility to fulfil.

It can present something outstanding: I got to write this article because I own a diary. Who knows what yours might present you with?

Here is a poem I once upon a time wrote about my diary:

When I flip back
I got caught in the pool of the past
A memory rack
Staring through rewinds my thoughts fast

Dated clefts to be filled with ink
Events can stay undeleted
Down record's drum it sinks
...life logs imprinted

A treasure I wouldn't want to miss
In it are words I solely authored
A collection of valuables I wouldn't want to lease
Reference for years ahead

Here am I, in the pool of my past
Courtesy...flipping back
In an instant, a reminisce...it came so fast
My memory rack

David Adedokun

Cutting Edge Corner

THE INFLUENCE OF FEAR AMONG TEENS: A CRITICAL PURVIEW.

By Father Peter Lucky Brakaebi.

PREAMBLE:

On one late evening, a few months ago, I was watching one Nigerian movie titled: "African Maidens, season two". There was one chief priest or Juju priest, in the course of acting, he uttered these words: FEAR IS THE GREATEST ENEMY OF MAN; FEAR DISTURBS MAN FAR MORE THAN A MAN APPEARING BEFORE THE SIGHT OF A PYTHON.

DESCRIPTION:

Likewise, so many of us are afraid of one thing or the other. Fear is something of the mind which can lead to external or proven manifestations in our real world. It could be a psychological entity. It gives rise to false attitude displayed among humanity. It might caused someone emotional imbalance which invariably could give rise to corruption of the state of the mind. Once our minds agree to the fact

that something or everything is negative, impossible and a failure, then we are being imprisoned by fear *intoto*.

CAUSES/FACTORS:

Fear focuses on a lots of factors. Fear can cause inferior complexity amongst youths, especially the female ones. Fear can cause us stage fright whenever we are asked to perform a function in the public. Fear can cause terrible tension while facing authorities. Fear can lead us to perform poorly in our exams. That is why, we often hear people say, "Exam fever". Fear can lead us to loose respect and trust in ourselves. Also, fear has the capacity to dismantle all our plans, dreams and potentials.

CATEGORY/SIDES TO FEAR:

Mind you, doubt is a direct sister to fear. Doubt rears double- minded intentions. Fear, many a time, suggests to one that something might not be too certain. Hence, we have an expression called the "Fear of the unknown". This can cause anxiety and worry in our lives. No wonder, Jesus taught his disciples with these words: "Do not be anxious of tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself. Care for today only; today's troubles too are sufficient for itself" (cf. Matthew 6:24-34).

CONSEQUENCES: THE DARK SIDES OF FEAR

In fear, truth suffers, falsehood triumphs. As I earlier said, fear is something of the mind. Fear is a negative spirit. Fear is a great enemy against human beings. Fear, therefore, is a primary and a great weapon the devil wields in fighting against the children of God. Fear is not real. It is deceptive. It is shadowy and shady too. Fear is a limitation. Fear lacks faith.

POSITIVE SIDE OF FEAR

In Matthew chapter 10, we are encouraged not to be afraid of anything, except God and sin, because He is our only Creator and almighty. He is the only person who can destroy both our souls and bodies in hell. Moreover, sin offends God. Not merely that. Sin also inflicts; sin imprisons; sin fascinates; and finally, sin destroys or kills one unto eternal damnation. The only remedy to remedy sin is to apply the love of God, avoiding the occasion of sin. And this is the essence of the doctrine of fear of sin. Note, the guilty are always afraid. To affirm this, Jesus said: "Truly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave. But the slave doesn't stay in the house forever; the son stays forever. So, if the Son makes you free, you will be really free

(John 8:34-36). Meaning there is no sinful person who is free from fear. The morality of the conscience of such a guilty fellow is being incapacitated with fear. As such, true freedom is being eluded. And once you are being set free by Christ Jesus, perfect love of Christ sets in. Because perfect love casts out all forms of fear (1John 4). Fear further implies punishment. All those who live in perpetual fear do not have perfect love in them.

BIBLICAL INJUNCTIONS Having considered all these, God saw that we might be finished if we kept playing with the tool of fear. God assures the people of Israel not to be afraid of their captivity; for he will set them free. That they should not be afraid of the nations or their enemies; for they would be rescued from their hands and be defeated. God told the Israelites to be mindful that he is always with them. They are not alone. God is their strength; he is their rock; he is their deliverer; he is their fortress; he is their joy; he is their salvation (Psalm 118:1-4). In the Bible, just as God assured the Israelites not to be afraid. In the same vein, in the new dispensation, he told Mary not to be afraid through angel Gabriel that the child in her womb is from God himself, not from human end (Luke 1:26-38).

CONCLUSION

In essence, my dear young people, today you are the new Israelites. You stand for the leadership of the tomorrow; church and the society at large. Let us now cast aside the spirit of fear from us by praying always; playing active role in the Church; believing and keeping the word of God and living an authentic Christian life.

Note, cowards never win rather they are lose.. We must appear courageous. After all, Robert Schuller, a versatile psychologist says, " Tough people do last whereas tough moments do not. So, we earnestly need the virtues of courage and patience in order to sail through turbulent times.

By so doing, our lights would continued to shine brighter more and more. You are only advised to fear God and all holy things, seen and unseen ones; fear sin and stop committing sin. Do not rather be afraid of death and the punishment that follows.

Rev. Fr. Peter Lucky Brakaebi, a Catholic priest of the diocese of Bomadi in Delta State of Nigeria. I finished from a renowned Seminary of SS. Peter Paul, Bodija, Ibadan, Oyo State; ordained a priest 2012. I hail from Torugbene town, Burutu LGA, Delta State. I am an Izon(Ijaw) by ethnicity. Born 3rd March 1977.

Currently, I am serving as a parish priest in St Paul Catholic Parish, Ekeremor,
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Diamond Tales

VALLEY OF ANGELS (EPISODE 2)

Continued from our previous issue. Email info@youthshades.com or visit www.youthshades.com for your free copy of the previous episode.

She had arrived earlier than most students ...humming her favorite tune she walked straight to her desk...

'piggy you forgot to say goodmorning' one of the bullies addressed her...she ignored her completely and began to arrange her books...

Then she saw a parcel underneath her desk... full of wonder, she bent and picked it up...slowly she unwrapped it...

'my god' she gasped.... Could this be real? A beautiful necklace with her name engraved on it from Chimobi as his name was clearly written on it...

'this isn't real' she almost screamed but held herself as her mates begun staring at her confusedly ...

A piece of paper fell from the parcel and she picked it up...

*Meet me at the canteen during break time
Chimobi Adams with love.*

She now understood the meaning of her dream earlier...

The rest of the day went on well except that her mind was far off... she dwelt on his gift...his message to her...her crush had finally noticed her...she was totally blown away....

The ring of the first bell brought her to her feet... she reached the door before turning back...she had to look good for him...but she had no make up with her... She approached Irene shyly...that was the only person closest to a friend that she

had...

'hi...' she smiled warmly at the girl...

'can I use some of your powder?'

'wow...does somebody have a date'? Irene grinned...she was the 'make up' artist of their time...she fetched the little box and poured Diana some....

'thanks' she dashed straight to the canteen...

**

*

Chimobi sat patiently... he needed to win this bet...if she didn't get into his bed within a month then he would pay the sum of ten thousand naira to his friends but if she did...they would pay him....

He didn't have that kind of money to waste proving a stupid point of being a chick magnet...he had to win this...get this done and over....

He smiled as Diana approached his table... this was the first time they were getting up close and personal. He knew she was Omale's baby sister and she was overweight and kind of dumb...that was all he knew about her...

'hi' she lowered her lashes to the ground...she couldn't meet his penetrating gaze, he was too handsome to behold...

'hello darling...stop being a kid...don't be shy' he raised her face with his hands...luckily the hall was still scanty...so nobody would spot them together and report to his girlfriend...

'okay...thank you for your gift' she smiled...it was a beautiful necklace...

'hope you loved it...I would give you more....if you agree to go out with me' he rubbed her chubby hands...

'like on a date'? she couldn't believe it...

'yes... anything you want' he answered while checking his time...

'but what of Seyi? And this is so sudden...' the words came out in a rush...

'baby...let's forget Seyi for now, I know how to handle her...I've been in love with you for a long while but I was afraid you wouldn't feel the same way' his voice was husky with emotion.

'you love me? I love you too but am hardly your type' she looked down on her size...

'you mean your weight? It doesn't matter...what matters is that you love me'....he scribbled some words on a paper and handed it to her...

'meet me here after school' he had to leave as Seyi was very close...

'you're leaving so fast'? she didn't want him to go...

'I have to, Seyi is here....we need a place we would have enough time for ourselves'...

'take this...buy yourself something' he offered her some money and hurried off. She warmed her chest with her fingers...it was real...her Chimobi had finally

found her...she stared at the address he'd given to her...
She felt happy for the first time in a long while...his love and attention had lifted
the melancholic veil from her...it was a thing of joy....

Leaving the house was more easy than she'd envisaged... her mother hadn't
listened to her reason for going out for long, she dismissed her with a wave of her
hand....

She wondered if she was doing the right thing... she loved Chimobi with all her
heart...she'd yearned for him as long as she could remember...fate had decided to
join them together.

'welcome dear' he pecked her forehead as she arrived the bar...

'thanks' she smiled shyly....this was all new ...no boy had ever shown her
attention...

'what would you like to drink'? he beckoned to the waiter...

'anything you'll have' Diana looked over the whole place...it was an expensive
bar...he really loved her...

'so... I have something for you' he brought out another parcel...he knew what
girls liked...they loved to be spoilt with gifts...to be adored and cherished.

'wow...this is too much...I love you so much' she couldn't hold herself
back...she hugged him tightly ...

'thank you'.... He felt suffocated...it was actually funny, the way she made him
feel...like some god...but he felt happy seeing her smile...

'so tell me about yourself' he wasn't really interested....he wanted something to
pass the time...

'there's nothing much to tell... am the only girl...my mother hates me...she's not
proud of me and so does my brother...my life is just a mess because am fat' she
poured out all her emotions...and he listened carefully...

He noticed the way Omale had spoken about his sister the other day...it portrayed
what she'd been telling him....

She was quiet for a while...he rubbed her hands gently not knowing what else to
say...

She thought about it for a while... 'you're the only friend I have...and I really feel
better talking to you'

A burden had been lifted off her shoulders...

'it was nice spending time with you...we should do this often...' he helped her up
her feet and they dispersed.

To be continued in our next issue.

Rose Akpabio is a poet and fiction story writer who hails from Essien Udim in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. She has a B.Sc Sociology from the University of Uyo. Rose started writing in college and has written over 30 fiction novels till date. Most of her works are published on the Davina Diaries blog (www.davinadiaries.com).

She hopes to bring light to world through her writings; and when she is not writing, she loves to read novels, watch movies, take pictures and listen to good music. Other titles by this author include *Whom the Gods Have Blessed; Love, Lies and Divorce; Dayo's Angel; Amazing Grace; Second Chances; and The Oluwatosin Trilogy.*

Learn

Compiled by **YakekponoAbasi Adams**

FACTS

- In Victor Hugo's novel, Les Miserables, you can find a sentence that is 823 words long.
- Dickens believed that sleeping facing North, would improve his writing. He also carried a compass when travelling to make sure he was facing the right direction and he always touched things 3 times for luck.
- The Anglo-Zanzibar war of 1896 is the shortest war on record lasting 38 minutes.
- Tolstoy owes War and Peace to his wife's efforts. The 1400 page novel was copied around 7 times by Leo Tolstoy's wife, Sophia, by hand – that's love.
- Albert Einstein was offered the role of Israel's second President in 1952, but declined.

- The Governor of Hunan Province in China banned Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* because he believed that animals should not be given the power to use the language of humans and to put animals and humans on the same level would be 'disastrous'.
- Princeton researchers successfully turned a live cat into a functioning telephone in 1929.
- Oxford English Dictionary notes the earliest use of the word 'wicked' to mean good/cool to be from Fitzgerald's novel 'This Side of Paradise'. He is also thought to have used the word T-shirt for the first time.

PHOBIAS

- Aerophobia – The fear of flying.
- Xenophobia – The fear of the unknown. Fearing anything or anyone that is strange or foreign.
- Trypophobia – The fear of holes .
- Carcinophobia – The fear of cancer. People with this develop extreme diets.
- Thanatophobia – The fear of death. Even talking about death can be hard.
- Glossophobia – The fear of public speaking. Not being able to do speeches.
- Monophobia – The fear of being alone. Even while eating and/or sleeping.

BRAIN TEASERS (find answers below)

1. There are three houses. One is red, one is blue, and one is white. If the red house is to the left of the house in the middle, and the blue house is to the right to the house in the middle, where is the white house?
2. You are in a cabin and it is pitch black. You have one match on you. Which do you light first, the newspaper, the lamp, the candle, or the fire?
3. What are the next three letters in the following sequence? J, F, M, A, M, J, J, A, __, __, __
4. Jimmy's mother had four children. She named the first Monday. She named the second Tuesday, and she named the third Wednesday. What is the name of the fourth child?
5. Before Mt. Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain in the world?
6. Which is heavier? A pound of feathers or a pound of rocks?

7. A family lives in a large tower apartment building, 10 floors high. Every day their son takes the elevator from the family's apartment on the 10th floor to the ground floor and goes to school. When he returns in the afternoon, he uses the elevator to get to the fifth floor, and then uses the stairs for the remaining five floors. Why?

Answers

1. In Washington, D.C.!
2. You light the match first!
3. S, O, N. The sequence is first letter of the months of the year. September, October, and November are the next in the sequence.
4. Jimmy, because Jimmy's mother had four children!
5. Mt. Everest. It was still the highest in the world. It just had not been discovered yet!
6. Neither. Both weigh a pound!
7. Because he cannot reach the buttons higher than five.

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