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YOUTH SHADES



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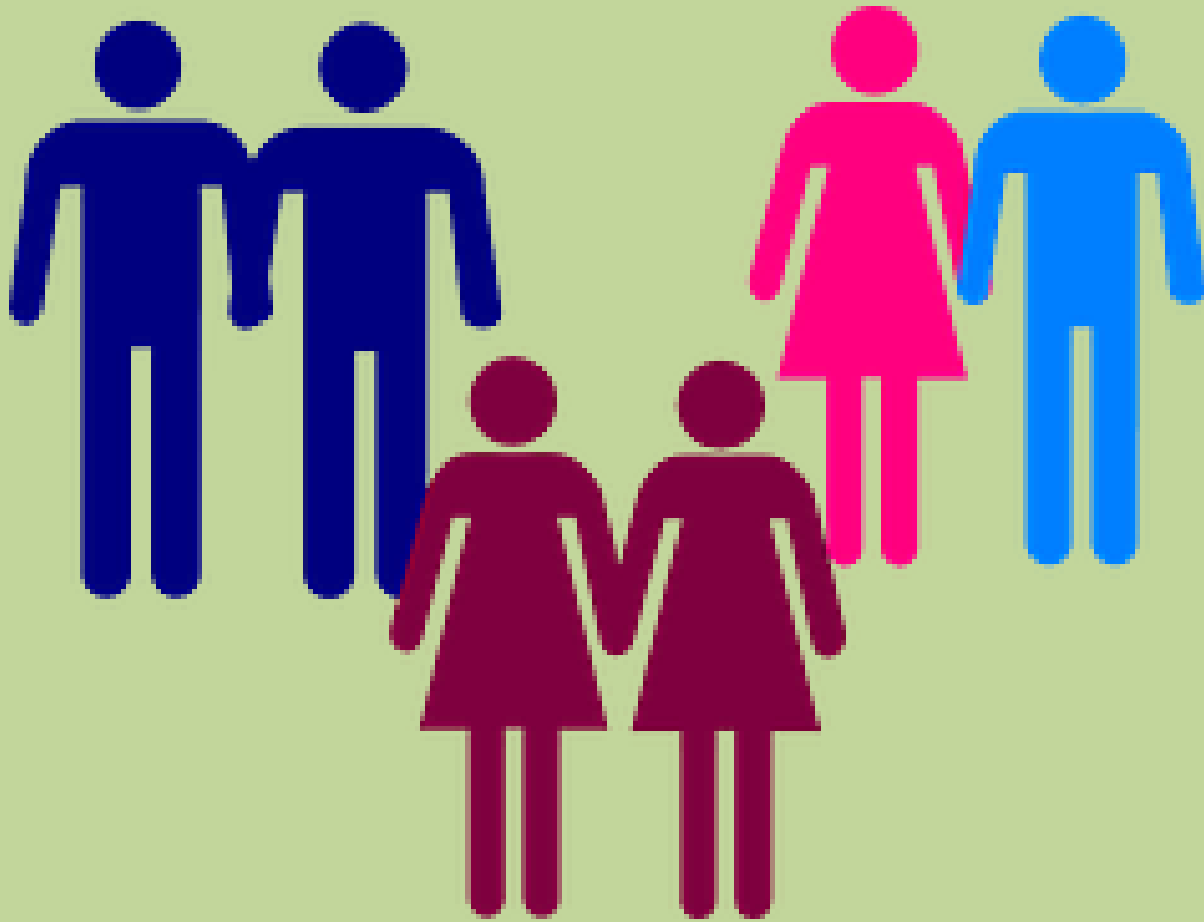
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EDITORIAL



Gay Marriage In Nigeria: To Be Or Not To Be

The issue of same-sex marriages has for some time now been a topic of discourse especially in Nigeria, as such practice is not allowed in the country. The argument had been so strong in couple of years past until it was formally passed

into law in 2013 prohibiting such practice in the country.

Nigeria recognizes neither same-sex marriages nor civil unions for same-sex couples.

Homosexuality can land men up to 14 years in prison in Southern Nigeria and capital punishment

for men in areas under Sharia Islamic Law.

10 years have been prescribed for anybody convicted of aiding and abetting the contraction of same sex marriage in Nigeria and also nullifies certificate of same sex marriage contracted outside the shores of Nigeria.

Additionally, the act kicked against the operation of gay clubs in Nigeria with a punishment of 10 years jail term without option of fine for anybody guilty of operating gay clubs within the country.

Homosexuality is illegal in most African nations based on remnants of sodomy laws introduced during the British colonial era and perpetuated by cultural beliefs. Punishments across the continent range from fines to years in prison. People having knowledge about the union could also be imprisoned for a maximum of 10 years.

One thing to put into consideration is that Gay unions have always existed. It's only in the recent past that people started paying attention to gay marriages in Nigeria. This was being fanned by the proposed Anti-Gay Bill (which is now Law) and activist groups. In fact, statistics put that 1 out of 5 Nigerians has in one way or another been involved with the same-sex.

This system has always been seen as a Western Idea and opponents to the gay marriage in Nigeria believe that this practice is a Western ideology. They view it as an erosion of African culture which prohibits same-sex marriages. The influence is largely fuelled by the influence of western culture through daily interaction and also the media.

Another thing to look out for is that there has never been gay marriage except for mere

allegations and we need to ask this question, “What is gay marriage?” This is the first question that might be asked by many Nigerians. Truth of the matter is that there has never been any recorded gay marriage in Nigeria. Since time immemorial, gayism and lesbianism have always been ridiculed. Therefore, the people involved rarely go public about it.

It is pertinent to know that Gay Marriages can never end because some countries around the world have chosen to legalize it and many are already practicing, while some are planning to legalize it. Hence, people are watching to see a safe haven where they can pitch their tent to continue the practice for fear of being arrested or killed.

People against gay and lesbian unions breathed a sigh of relief when the bill was passed.

Nevertheless, just like in many other regions, quite a number of Nigerians know that the marriages can never end. Religion and culture has always been the main driver against this act. Notwithstanding, people are moving away from religion and culture.

Just as these said existing gay guys in Nigeria are yet to be caught in the act, allegations still has it that many Gay couples in Nigeria are Bi-sexual. People engaging in same-sex unions may also be in a straight-marriage setting. Many are fathers/mothers who have children. This has always been the norm hence trying to draw the line between the two completely-opposite unions is quite a task. Some do this as a cover-up while others discover their inclinations while in a straight-marriage.

There is unequal condemnation about gay relationships in public.

Lesbianism is more acceptable than gayism. Two ladies walking hand-in-hand or displaying affection in public may be overlooked. However, for two men to even share a brotherly hug, the people around will drop what they were doing just to witness such an event. This probably explains why the number of men engaging in the activity is perceived to be less than that of women.

The Anti-Gay Law came at a time when other countries were warming up to the idea of seeing gays and lesbians getting married legally. France, the US, and also South Africa had done it. Well, on paper the unions are prohibited in Nigeria. However, the unions still exist but in utmost secrecy.

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POETRY



Photographer: Victor Ettekamba - Nigeria

Karen King – U.K

smoking

An addiction that keeps you
calm,
Same lot causes you ghost harm.

Your teeth stained and taints
your hair,
Pockets out-turned, leaves you
no spare.

Another form of taking drugs,
Easily obtainable, like tea in a
mug.

Both wake you up and give you a
buzz,

But they leave the brain a
terrible fuzz.

“Is it worth it”, I hear you say?

“Perhaps there is a better way?”



**Alicia Minjarez
Ramírez – Mexico -
the path of your
steps**

Naked and lurking
tenderness at the
riverbank,

a kiss clinging on as
a vine

climbing through
the sap of my
branches.

I spy on the night in
your thistles,
adjacent meridians
in the nectar of
your Nile.

Of all your summers
emanate and
disappear

All the money to relieve the
stress,

Leave your finances in a mess.

Why not go out in the fresh air,

In the countryside? It's for all to
share!

There awaits you a natural high,

Amidst breezed trees in a
splendid sky!

crepuscular
fragments, frosts
decorate the
melodic chant of
orioles and
blackbirds.

I invent you and
lose you in the
zephyr choleric
notes, the sublime
lightness makes
silence thunder up.

Dissolving my
dawns in the hustle
of

memory, fire
against the light of
the stranger and
nubile torso of your
body. You rain and

crumble over my
fragrant touch,
blast that exalts the
sound of the stones
building up my
roads, long gone

and desolated
landscapes,
blooming today
behind your own
steps.



**Colin Cameron – U.K - please
daddy, please...**

Hey dad, can you tuck me in
Then read me a story, about that
magic violin
Where everyone danced, and
slipper lost
Where cows are sold, at magic
beans cost

The one with the apple, stuck in
the throat

Of the troll under the bridge,
and Billy Griff Goat

Where princesses are gorgeous,
Princes are brave

Battling dragons, avoiding fiery
grave

You know I love it when you tell
me of elves and wizards

Of Giants, of dwarves, of ghastly
beasts gizzards

Of castles and turrets, haunted
caves

Of madmen and spells, lost in
the raves

Go on dad, it won't take long

I'll be asleep soon, if you sing my
favourite song

I don't mind if you read or sing

I just want you near, I'm your
princess, you my king

So don't make excuses, say a
prayer with me

Sit on my bed, don't be a
parental absentee.



Dauda Onawola - Nigeria - for our race

We can't break

No we won't break

For emotion, even
when we get heart
break

We won't break

In the race of man

It's been a long
streak

Of succession

And this generation

Shall not fail

So the youths

I say we won't
break

It is our turn

To birth life

Now there is war

Thousands paths

Which do we follow

All or none

Even in this
philosophical
confusion

No we won't break

The baton had been
silently passed to us

We shall take it

And we shall run

From this place

We can't break

Rigors are plenty
but

Victory is our
terminal



Pm Bahar Ahmed - Bangladesh – my love

My love!
She is living in my
heart
Always present in
my dreams,
She is flying like a
beautiful bird.

My love!
When I almost lose
hope
And think about my
bad times,
Then she is my
comfort.

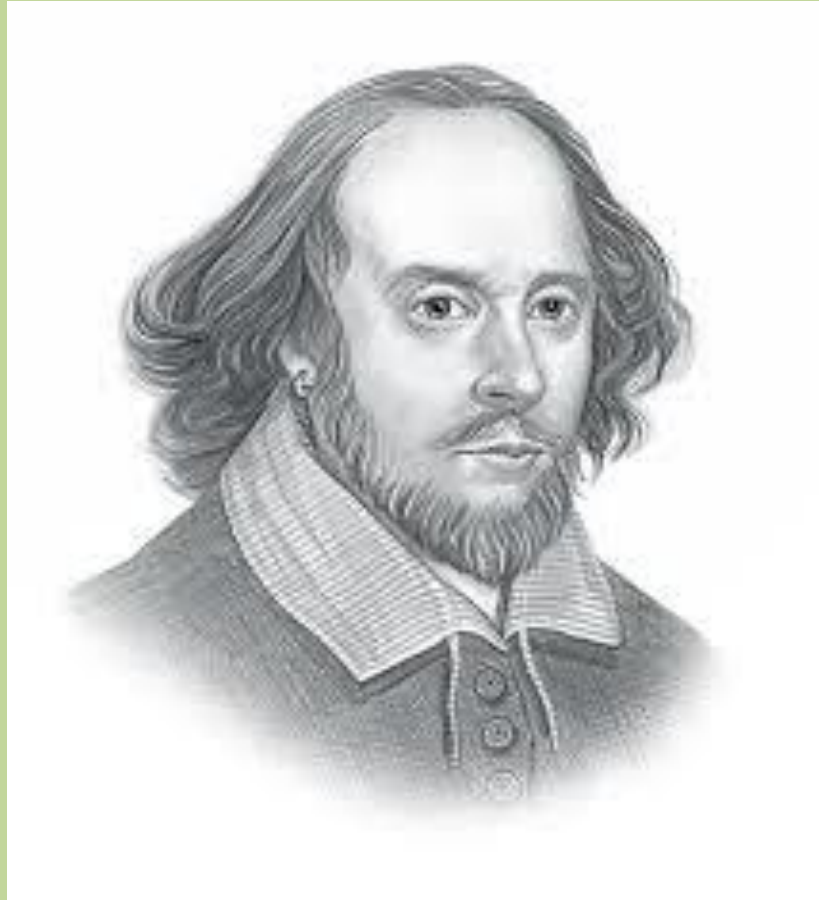
My love!

Ever-present, she comes by
And sprinkles love on my heart
She makes me happy
She scents of a flower.

My love!
She is an imagination
The dream and sweetest heart feeling!
She comes when I sleep or in my thoughts.

She loves me very passionately.

My love!
She is the dream that I feel in reality.



**Valentine mbagu – Nigeria -
tribute to Shakespeare**

To whom do I liken thee, oh god
of gods: William Shakespeare,
Art thou not an immortal god or
an incarnate of a spirit being?
Howbeit thy sepulcher, is but an
idol, kept sacr'd by all human?
Of a truth, thy wisdom is greater
than the wisdom of gods.

Whereupon thy plaque of
wisdom, do I invest my
foolishness?
I'll treasure thee until the ocean
is fold'd and hung up to dry:
Thou art a monument without a
tomb, yet art fore'er alive in
history,
If I can but fit into thy beard,

only then will I be fit to wed
myself.

Shakespeare, art thou a
supernatural god or an immortal
creature?

Howbeit thy enchanting quill
doth live, in spite of death, and
cannot die?

Thy historic writings I'll idolize,
for to thy muse, I am confess'd,
To whom do I liken thee, thou
wittiest of all Socrates, if not but
a god.

To thy legacies I am confess'd,
for thy pen is worth more than
gold,
Thou art the enigma of all times,
none can exist thus like thee:
The Gigantic Ink that paint'd the
pages of history with a historic
Art;
Sage, thou art a historic page
whose duplicate canne'er be
produc'd.

Beneath thy tomb lies an Art,
which neither man nor nature
can ever forget,

Thou was not for an age, but all
time, for nature herself boast'd
of thee;

Mellifluous Shakespeare, thy
historic impacts makes the silent
grave

arous'd,

Thou the wittiest sage of all
times, whose name doth deck
history.

To whom do I liken thee, thou
Sweet Swan of Avon, William
Shakespeare,

Thou art the Idol of all sages who
flights upon the river of Thames,

Shakespeare, thou art the
wittiest of all Socrates, whose
muse cannot be
tam'd,

Of a truth, thou art a historic
sage whose name history
canne'er forget.



Tze Min Tsai - Republic of China – the love of poetry collection

Kiss

Beautiful body beside curly hair

Breast, The world is so Sensitive

Induced love in the passion

Naked Mirage, Under the pituitary gland

One by one

Look at the moving face with excitement

Keep up

A deeper temptation awaits

Completely surrender in unable to extricate themselves

Born too early so much

Mother-like supple

No intention to be your lover

Wait

Completely melted in the mouth, One day

Only when the infinite passion

Love is bleak, Floating in the air

Before sealing

sufficient

Has been living in the perceptual illusion



**Benjamin Peter – Nigeria -
ajuwaya**

.....as you were.....

"Mme kpa o"

Cry of mothers

Running with babies

Tied to the tummy

"Di nyaña o"

Wailing of babies

Flooded by blood

Of their own mothers

Borno to Congo

Sudan to Mali

Breastbones of dead mothers

Eaten by hungry babies

Babies of war

Babies of terror

Abandoned to soar

For a nation's error

War is not African

Africa fights freedom

Missiles against terror

Missiles against corruption

War is not African

Africa loves children

Caring is African

Memories of past kindreds

This is not Africa

Take me back home

Home to an Africa

With no dead bones

Africa is black

Black hunts no black

Black traps bears

Just as we were



Amos Joshua – Nigeria – weeping universe

The pillars of
our civilization
Crumbles
amid the
tremor of
ethnic strife
and
segregation
Amid these
fracas and
frays

for courses
with no
destination
What's our
excuse?

We forget too
soon
the scabrosity
and asperity
of
the journey
that had

ferried us thus
far
In a universe
where we
stand
alone
Our wailing
earth we
exiled
into the
labour room
If we destroy
our home

what will be
our excuse?

We grope in
blindness
Bragging of
superiority
among
ourselves
when the path
before us we
can't even see
As we sink
deeper into
the
pool of hate
and
bloodshed
Our respect
for life
drowning
amid the
waves of the
roaring sea
We've
unleashed hell
on

ourselves
What's our
excuse?

I hear the
wails of the
weeping
universe
Droplets of
her bitter
tears hit
our earth
The stars look
down in
saddest grief
As they
witness the
unleashing of
grave
catastrophes
But here we
slumber on
Sinking our
faces in the
river
of racism

Malice eats
into the
fabrics of our
senses
and blinds our
eyes to this
glaring
realism
that in truth,
we are all one
humanity

And if
tomorrow our
kids stagger
homeless and
aimless
in the desert
of disunity
and avarice
Our most
esteemed
legacy
Who shall we
blame?
What's our
excuse?

**Zimba Isaac – Zambia – she
will rise again**



The words of a cold heart,
The tears of a dark soul
This soul's innermost secret
She's been hurt,
She's been bruised,
She's been lied to,
She's cried,
Shattered to shreds,
And these broken fragments of
her past,
Are what are left of her present,
She lives only on the hope of a
better tomorrow,

That one of the days justice will
prevail,
That one day her victory ship
will sail,
When her eyes will beam with
pride,
Because she has made it past
the stride,
That she has rediscovered her
worth,
And pursue her dreams of
rebirth,
She lives for that day when the
sun's rays,
Will proudly kiss the pinions of
her wings,
And from the ashes she'll rise
again
like a phoenix and enjoy the
best feeling life will bring.

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STORIES



Dasharath Naik – India – the bite

The other day the uniform clad butterfly was in full frenzy and glee. Fluttering her wings, she was basking in the tender sun in a cold morning, dancing and singing to the tune of the whistling wind. In the waves of youthful craze and passion, she was in her reverie being attracted by the wild infatuation. She had stepped in the prohibited Red Light Area. An unknown thrill! A sizzling temptation!

Wreathed with nature's glow and hues of spring, she had prepared herself no less attractive than a queen. With the thought of the prospect of wild pleasure, she was absorbed in her thoughts.

She was impatiently waiting for that wonderful moment; she was at a fix. The octopus of confusion had grabbed and trapped her from all sides in entirety. Her conscience was biting her hard. Should she fly away? Should she escape this dark dungeon?

Yes! Before she is crushed in the wild storm;

Before she loses her long -preserved dignity;

Before her innocence is trampled;

Before her beauty is lost for ever;

She should flee away in search of her own identity;

A new address of her own;

For a bright and golden future.



Amaka Felly Obioji
– Nigeria – a little
sadness

It would be on the morning you discover your sadness that you'd say *'biko, I don't want this sadness.'* You will wake up on that day's morning of discovery feeling heavy and lifeless and you would feel the need to run in your track suit - a habit you despise.

You'll run, but the heaviness in your head won't leave. You will come back later, drenched in sweat with severe headache. You'll be in the moment of self-torture. You will pant for air and realize you have jogged from Afia nine to Ekwueme square; something you'd never do on days you knew no sadness, on days there was no

heaviness in your head.

It will be in that moment of sadness and reflection that you will find it, you will find the cause of your pain, you will see it hiding at one corner of your soul with its weight dragging your soul down and causing your heart burn.

Suddenly, you will realise it was not the okpa from mama Aboy (the

one you eat every morning during week days) that made your heart boil like hot water. It would be then that you will realise that you have been carrying a large amount of pain, you will grieve over it.

It would be after that morning when you must have had your bath which took you three hours trying to scrub out the scent of what made you sad. It was yet in the bath that you knew you couldn't take it anymore, that if you kept on that journey, you might collapse.

So when you alighted from the

bath, you were scared to call him and tell him that it was over. You then ran to your phone and typed a long draining message converting your sadness to words.

It was just 5 minutes after you had sent the message that your phone rang for the fiftieth time, but you were scared to answer; you didn't want to answer. You left your phone at home to your day's work.

And since it was a Thursday, another week day, you bought okpa from mama Aboy. That day, for the first time in so many

years, you ate the okpa without being afraid that your heart might boil like that hot water which market women use in removing chicken feathers at ogbo okuko in Onitsha.

That day, you noticed that the okpa had one sweet flavour that tasted like uda; you enjoyed it. It was evening you had a great laugh with your friends and you were invited over for a party the next day.

That sadness was suddenly nowhere to be found. You talked about weavens and the best saloons in

town. You asked
where you can
make your nails and
your friends
marvelled at your
sudden change.

You also noticed
you had changed
and you felt
happier. On that
day too, you saw
him standing at the
door of your house
holding flowers

with eyes filled with
I am sorry but you
didn't want to hear
him.

You collected the
flowers because
they smelt nice and
told him to his face
without fear, with
so much confidence
that it was over.
And that you had
lost yourself loving
him, that you

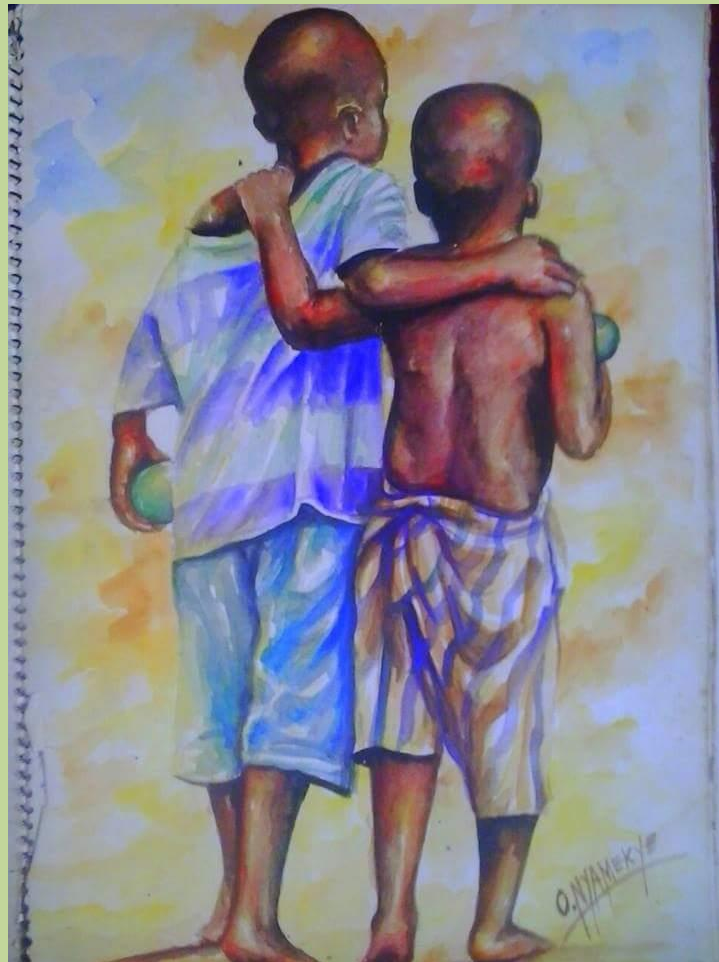
wanted your space
and couldn't endure
the heavy burning
in your heart again.

He left almost
drenched in tears
and you were
happy, very happy,
that you could
make him cry and
from that day you
never felt sadness
again.

ARTS & SKILLS



Artist: Odei Nyamekye, Ghana



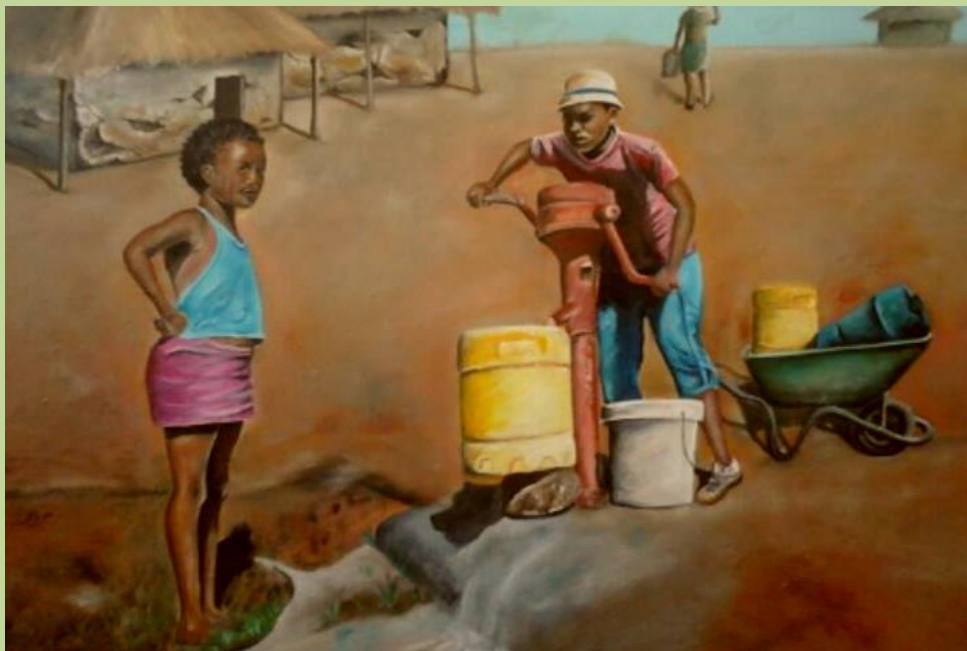
Artist: Odei Nyamekye, Ghana



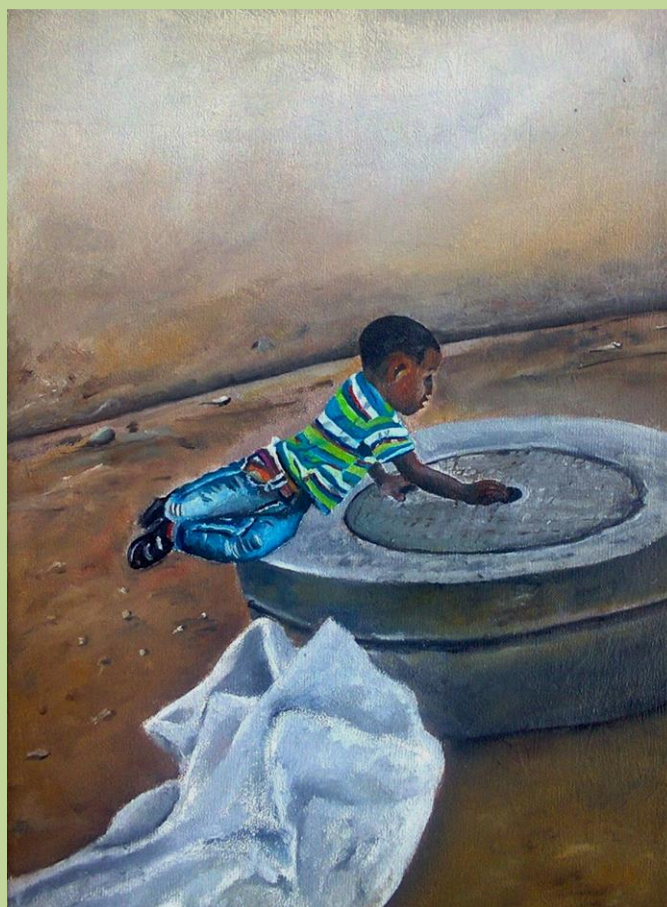
Artisit: Odei Nyamekye, Ghana



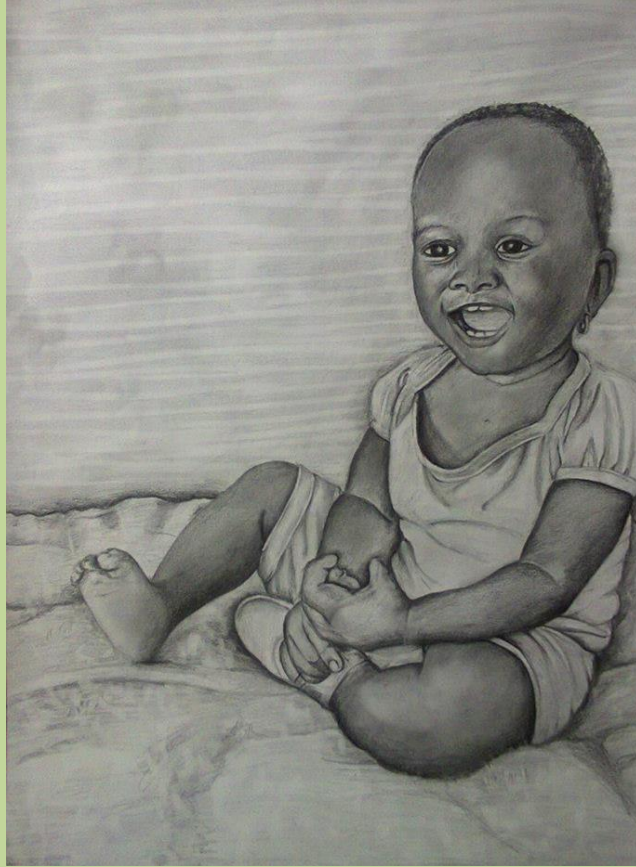
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Artisit: Ithali Khoza, South Africa



Artisit: Ithali Khoza, South Africa



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ARTICLES



Paul Preye – Nigeria - the dignity of labour among teachers and students today (I)

It is a truism that the sterling beauty of labour or hardwork cannot be overemphasized. In fact, it is the pride of heroes and heroines; it was the pride of the former president of Ghana, Kwame Francis Nkrumah. Today however, there is a shift in paradigm. Many people do not want to work, but they want to eat. They want *"to gather where they did not scatter."* They want to be heroes without starting from zero. They want to have excellent results without working for it and in the end,

they become half-baked graduates and nuisance in the society. For how long will this nonchalant attitude exist?

My dear friends, things are really falling apart, and worse still the center cannot hold. People are beginning to lose sight of the dignity of labour. Nevertheless, it is on this backdrop that I write this piece of note to young men and women, most especially teachers and students.

On the part of students

My beloved students, I know quite well that it is not easy to be mentees under mentors in a "tormenting" atmosphere; but, seize every opportunity in every difficulty to better yourselves. What are your goals in life? Many of you may have very brilliant visions in life, but only some may end up achieving them, while others may not due to misplacement of priority.

Students think about your parents, your friends, and everyone around you. What kind of life are they living? Don't you want to be better than them, or are you comfortable with the level of moral decadence and corruption destroying our society?

If no is your answer (to the latter question) then put the following into practice:

1. Be prayerful. Cooperate with the grace of God, because one with God is majority.
2. Respect your parents, leaders (teachers) and elders.

3. Love reading good and necessary books. Never allow a day to pass you by without revising what your teachers taught you during the day.

4. Avoid bad friends and those who steal your precious time.

5. Be very punctual and active in class activities.

6. Go to bed as early as possible (probably between 9-10pm).

7. Take good care of your health.

8. Be optimistic.

9. Avoid illicit intimacy/sex and unwanted pregnancy - it destroys one's destiny. In fact, it is one of the shortest

ways of destroying girls' destinies. Make sure you have proper understanding of sex education, most especially from your parents and teachers respectively.

10. Set good standards in life; have self-respect. Don't take what does not belong to you. Also remember that freedom without responsibility does not make a good personality; It is what you sow as a "little" child, that you will reap when you grow "old".

On the part of teachers

My dearly and highly esteemed teachers, it is a thing of joy to be

teachers, models and mentors. It is of no news that teachers are God's special instruments for recreating a

better and godly society. You have made yourselves available for this great task. May God give you the grace

to accomplish it, and may He also crown your good efforts with success. Amen.



MEMOIR: Rosy Roses – South Africa - physically challenged mum

As a child I was told that I had a disability at the hip joint; I could walk but not run. Years passed by and at the age of 16, doctors

discovered that my spinal cord was rather the problem.

Throughout these years, I never felt ashamed of who I am. I had

a *normal* life, dated like any girl my age till I found the love of my life who is now my fiancé and the father of my baby.

After five years of being together, we decided to add to our little family. Those 9 months were the hardest of my entire life; I totally lost my ability to walk. My son was born weighing 2.30kg, but then worry soon kicked in.

When it was time for him to crawl like other kids, he didn't. I thought he had taken after me,

but at 1 year and two months old, he was running around with no worry in the world. I thank God every day for the blessing He has given to me. In everything that I do, I need assistance, but I have a loving and supporting family. Sometimes, I do wish I could run around with my little one.

I have never seen myself as a disabled person, i guess that is why I have so much self-confidence.



CALL FOR SUBMISSION

Deadline for submission of Stories, Poetry, Articles, Arts & Skills for December Issue of Youth Shades Magazine is **10th November, 2016**.

Visit www.youthshades.com for our submission guidelines.

Entries should be sent to info@youthshades.com

Peace and Love,

Youth Shades Team.