

Kistrech

7TH EDITION



**Kistrech Poetry Festival
Kenya 2019, Vol.7**
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MESSAGE FROM THE PATRON

I take this opportunity to welcome you to the 7th edition of Kistrech International Poetry Festival in Kenya. As a lasting partner of this event, for the seventh year running, we have seen immense value of this festival, in terms of cultural exchange and exposure to academic experiences of our students and lecturers here at Kisii University.

We are glad that art agencies like NORLA (Norwegian Literature Abroad), Greece Ministry of Culture and Netherlands Literature Foundation and Embassies like Israel and Czech Republic and art and cultural centres like Goethe institut-Nairobi and institutions of higher learning like the University of Nairobi are involved and have joined hands to give their support.

We are glad that we have poets coming from diverse regions of the world, such as Norway, Netherlands, USA, China, Denmark, Czech Republic, Israel, etc. That will increase academic as well as art exchange between the established writers and our student-poets.

I am sure that this year's event will provide a platform on which the students and upcoming poets will share knowledge and craft of writing poetry. Our students are likely to get opportunities to present their works and find possibilities of presenting the same in other countries where visiting poets come from. They will also get an opportunity to interact with publishers who will guide them on what is needed to have their poetry accepted for publication. They will get an opportunity of interacting with the best global brains in the creative field and absorb knowledge and skills of writing from them.

I have a belief that art improves and impacts heavily on quality of human life. It is therapeutic and without doubt adds benefits to human life. We in Africa need art most. With the stresses that come with hard economic life that we lead, art can act as a soothing tool to reduce stress and provide growth and wellness.

In African communities, art especially poetry, played a big role during the traditional society. It brought people together to chat the way for their life. Poetry provided a platform on which creativity was displayed. Chants, songs and rituals were social platforms on which the community flourished, received education and on which unity was fostered. Oral poetry, songs and chants passed words of hope, motivation and joy to the people, and thereby added quality to life. It was songs and chants that carried the wisdom and knowledge of the people. It was through them that people lived, survived and thrived. Long live poetry and art. Long live our poets and artists.

Professor John S. Akama
Vice-Chancellor, Kisii University



I am sure that this year's event will provide a platform on which the students and upcoming poets will share knowledge and craft of writing poetry.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR/DIRECTOR

Jambo!

Welcome to the 7th edition of Kistrech Poetry Festival in Kenya. This year we have poets who come from countries that have not been represented in our festival before. This is the first time we have a poet from China -- Zhao Si; and the first time we have a poet from Czech Republic -- Professor Libor Martinek; and also the first time we have a poet from Greece -- Maria Mistrioti. In addition to these poets, we have Dori Parnes (Israel), Morten Langelands (Norway), Thomas Boberg (Denmark), Robert Yeo (Singapore), Erlend Wichne (Norway), Rosemarie Wilson, a.k.a One Single Rose, who was here in 2015 and 2017; Darlin Mikki (USA), and Dean Bowen (Netherlands). With these galaxy of poets, we are sure there is going to be a lot to share and achieve during this festival.

Poetry, in its own characteristic is sought and needed by everybody, as it is food for the soul. As Gjeke Marinaj (UZBEK's Kitob Dunyosi, 2019) observes, poetry is a human need. Marinaj in an interview by Mizrahi Muzafar (trans. by Mehrinoz Abbosova) states that "It can serve as medicine against mental and spiritual pains, as an inspiration to become better human beings, as an educational guide in our daily lives." He goes further to state that "poetry is the most realistic mirror of life, but we must look at it carefully and faithfully to see our true reflection" (UZBEK's Kitob Dunyosi, 2019).

In the preliterate society in Africa, oral poetry was, not only part of life, but life itself. Poetry could be composed and sung and chanted to convey a message, to educate, to ridicule, to praise or to warn the society against impending occurrences. It was part and parcel of life. It was chanted in marriages and circumcision ceremonies; during harvest and during hunting. It colored the entire life of the people.

Because of its importance, poetry is found and is in constant use in one form or the other. That is why Marinaj (2019) feels that it is in the DNA of all other art forms. Marinaj States thus: "We can examine music, painting, architecture, technological art, prose or any other aspect of artistic creativity and clearly see that a coat of poetry is part of the many layers of each art form" (Marinaj, 2009). In other words it is part of the life and the activities we carry out every day. That underscores the importance of poetry in our everyday life.

As we interact during this poetry festival, let us allow ourselves to drink generously from the poetic fountain that will nourish our minds with knowledge and wisdom that comes with this genre.

Dr. Christopher Okemwa
Director, Kistrech International Poetry Festival Kenya



*Because of its
importance, poetry
is found and is in
constant use in one
form or the other.*

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

I take this opportunity to welcome poets from all over the world participating at this year's Kistrech International Poetry Festival. We are honoured to host the poets at the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi, during their visit. The Festival will benefit both our student-poets and lecturers by the presence of the poets and this great opportunity to directly interact with them.

Thanks to Dr. Christopher Okemwa's unwavering efforts. His dream of having an annual international poetry festival has come true. The Kistrech International Poetry Festival has come a long way and it is celebrating its 7th anniversary this year. Dr. Okemwa's passion for poetry is admirable and his firm belief that poetry brings people together to share as one humanity, has brought this festival this far.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, in my favorite book, *The Little Prince*, states, "The most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or touched, they are felt with the heart." Poets have the ability to make us see things with our heart through the use of their powerful and beautiful words. I am confident that this Festival will bring us together in appreciating not only poetry but our shared humanity.

I wish all participants a wonderful and fruitful festival.

Dr Masumi Odari,
Chair, Department of Literature,
University of Nairobi



ABUGA NYAKORIA DUKE



KENYA

Abuga Nyakoria Duke is an active dramatist and poet having successfully directed a number of plays and oral poems in Kenya. He graduated from the University of Nairobi with a Bachelor of Education in Linguistics and Literature and a Master of Arts in Literature in 2006 and 2012 respectively. Currently, he is a PhD student in literature at Kisii University and teaches English and Literature in one of the secondary schools in Kisii County.



My Dear Sanguine Bullet

My dear Sanguine bullet,
I still love you.
I still cherish your huff and puff,
I still admire your adder and ladder;
You fly to gaze and eulogize,
As my crazy and constant smiles syllogize,
Tears of love swell and stream in my eyes.
I beseech you, look at me now.

My dear Sanguine bullet,
Innocent citizens are still praying and mourning,
They are still blubbering and grieving,
They are still gloomy and moony;
You fly to wed and bed,
Busting us with your elopement and development;
As hues and cries engulf the air,
Just as the sky thunder.
I beseech you, listen to their voices.

My dear Sanguine bullet,
Children are still weeping and kippering;
Their homes are still full of smog and smoke.
They are still suffocating in your blood drops,
You fly to swallow and wallow,
Just as mosquitoes' fuel engine,
That has taken barren human blood.
I beseech you, look at them.

My dear Sanguine bullet,
Widows are still damp and stump,
They are still foggy and muggy,
They are still daunting and dreary;
You fly to plant hazels and teasels,
As your venom quenches their thirst;
I beseech you, look at them.

My dear Sanguine bullet,
I am still sobbing and talking!
I am still wailing and pleading!
I am still calling and waiting;
You fly to traumatize and stigmatize;
As your belly ripples and ruptures,
Mythology and anthologies gaze at me.
I beseech you, to remember my kindness.

-By Abuga Nyakoria Duke.

CHRISTOPHER OKEMWA



KENYA

Christopher Okemwa is a lecturer of Literature as well as the director of the Board of Postgraduate Studies at Kisii University, Kenya. He is the founder and director of Kistrech International Poetry Festival in Kenya.

His poetry collections include *The Gong* (Nsemia Inc., 2010), *Purgatorius Ignis* (Nsemia Inc., 2016), *Ominous Clouds* (Translated to Norwegian, Finnish & Greek; Nsemia Inc., 2018); *The Pieta* (trans. to Armenian Պիեթա; Narcis, 2019), and *A Withering Rose* (Trans. to Polish and Bohemian Vadvoucí růže; 2019). He has also published a short story collection, *Chubot, the Cursed One and Other Stories* (Nsemia Inc., 2011). He has published three children's books, *The Visitor at the Gate*, *Let us Keep Tiger* and *The Village Queen* (Paulines Africa, 2010, 2011, 2013). This is in addition to four oral literature texts, *Riddles of the Abagusii People of Kenya: Gems of Wisdom from the African Continent* (Nsemia Inc., 2011), *The Proverbs of the Abagusii of Kenya: Meaning & Application* (Nsemia Inc., 2012) *Otenyo the Great Warrior of the Abagusii People of Kenya* (Nsemia Inc., 2016) and *The Oral Poetry in Africa: Abagusii People of Kenya* (Nsemia Inc., 2019). He has also written five folktales of the Abagusii people of Kenya in Ekegusii language, *Ogasusu na Oganchogu* (The Hare and the Elephant), *Ogasusu na Okanyambu* (The Hare and the Chameleon), *Ogasusu na Okanyang'au* (The Hare and the Hyena), *Okang'ombe Okanyang'au na Ogakondo* (The Cow, the Hyena & the Monkey), and *Kerangeti na Kerantina* (Kerangeti & Kerantina). Okemwa's novella, *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*, won 2015 Canadian Burt Award for African Literature (Kenya). Its sequel, *Sabina the Rain Girl* (Nsemia Inc., 2019) came out this year.

Okemwa took Theatre and technical Courses held at Churchill Hall, University of Bristol, and at King Alfred's College, Winchester, in England, from July to August 1991, sponsored by NODA (National Operatic & Dramatic Association). He attended a poetry workshop in Northern Ireland in 1993 sponsored by Poets' House. He participated at the 20th International Poetry Festival in Medellin (Colombia) in 2010 sponsored by Prince Claus Fund. He was a guest poet at the 27th Biennale Poetry Festival in Liege (Belgium) in 2012. He was again a guest-poet in the 3rd Spring and Poetry Festival in Istanbul (Turkey) in 2018. He was a visiting poet at the International Poetry Festival of Hanoi (Vietnam) in February 2019; and was a creative writing resident at Faber Writers' Residency in Olot, Catalonia (Spain) in May 2019 which gave birth to a collection of poems titled *Love from Afro Catalonia* (Nsema Inc. 2019). This year, the Liffit Eurasian Literary Festival has identified Okemwa as one of Africa's prominent poet and has invited him to participate in their IV festival of festivals in Baku (Azerbaijan) in September 30 to October 03, 2019.

Okemwa earned his PhD degree in Literature from Moi University, Kenya, with a dissertation titled "A Study of the Kwani? Open Mic 'Literary-Gangsta' Performance Poetry of Kenya." He also holds an MA and a Bachelor of Education degree in literature from the University of Nairobi, Kenya.



This morning

This morning I woke up
With a sense of loss
I found silence holding the four corners of my bed-room
And a mystery
A sort of muse
Playing between light and darkness
Among the walls and empty spaces

I slipped down from my narrow bed
Quickly ransacked my suitcase for your photos
I couldn't find any
Scrawled down the screen of my phone
With nervous fingers
I didn't see one; my cheeks flashed white

Looking at the mirror on the wall
A sad curve formed at the corner of my mouth
My forehead became pale--just like a dull day
The evidence of hunger
For a loved one back home

Now seated at the table
I sketch your body on a piece of paper
An imagination of the woman that I love
An expression within me
Of whom I know you have been to me

I pencil your foaming lips, your flashing
Teeth, circles twin hillocks on your chest
Your deep sensuous navel
I repeatedly scratch on the pupils of your eyes
Making them dilated, adds more pencil
On the cheeks to make them dazzling and flaming

Shades the hair to make it glossy
Cleaves your forehead with two wrinkles
(You can't be young forever)
Gives a dark shade to your nose
A light colour to your chin
Then the neck of a swan to stabilize your head

I sit back to examine the finished work
My body twitches
I move my lips down
To kiss it
Suddenly I hear a loud sigh from a distant
A silent longing
A lusty act from a lover
With the utterance "I miss you honey."



Cliff Oyugi Kerage



KENYA

*Play along with me
like a baby doll,
Be my buzzing bee
in the morning dew*

My Symphony

Sweet little songbird
Would you be the symphony
That soothes my soft heart
When I am feeling so low?
Beneficent guardian angel
Spread your wings like a skylark
Make me protected like a hopeless dove
Liberated from the hawk's jaw
Hold tight the hand of my soul
And walk me across the shore
Chirp and dance with me in the moonlight
Play along with me like a baby doll
Be my buzzing bee in the morning dew
Let me be your juicy blossom that never withers
My cute little songbird
Would you be my symphony?
-By Cliff Oyugi Kerage

Confined Soul

I am all alone
Incarcerated in a gloomy nook
Where the sun is ashamed to shine
Feeling devoid and utterly lost
Loathing this life I cannot trust
For doing me many awful things
Ravishing and defiling my innocence
A puny in body and mind
My fragile heart annihilated
And turned into an emotional wretch
Pain piercing through my numb soul
My world so heartless and scattered
Draining my future dreams
Leaving me with assassinated hopes
Forsaken like an alien
To drown in an ocean of tears
With breath swinging on a loose string
Nothing to make me strong
No one offering me a shoulder to lean on
Nobody wanted me born after all
Doom awaits me yonder
I smile but my eyes never smile
For the truth is incredible and tragic
A feeling of tragedy underneath



DARLIN MIKKI



| USA

Black Girl

Hey black girl...do you know who you are
 Who you really are
 Do you know you can be
 What you wanna be
 If you try to be...
 But I'm bent
 I be damn near broken
 I be Hopeless
 Hoping that it will just end
 I be scarred beyond belief
 I be zero
 Self inflicted
 Wound not healing
 I be Open
 Bleeding pain
 Reliever
 Relieves her
 Not really
 I be ripped, torn
 Born bad sheep
 Outkast hey y'all
 I might as well be outlaw
 Labeled trouble
 I be the name
 Maimed
 I be ready to go under
 No fight left in me
 Blow, slaps, fist
 I be taking everything
 I be blocking blessings
 God don't even want me
 I be garb...
 Nah you be queen
 Hand seamed
 Built to withstand anything
 Do you know you can be creator of life
 Feed without spoon
 Do you know you can be healer of wounds with just lips
 You can go zero to 100 real quick
 Monthly
 Honey Dew you know you can be protector
 Weapon of flesh for seeds
 Yea you bleed not because scars
 You're preparing place for nations
 Do you know you can be whatever mind visions
 You were made in his image
 Made up, Mac up absent

Darlin Mikki nicknamed "Boss lady" because of her feisty yet dominant personality hit the scene behind the spotlight managing and event planning for well known artists. While honing her craft with her poetry club F.Y.F. and her name attached to some of the biggest sold out events in spoken word, such as The Annual Leo Bash, Bits and Pieces & At Ease Sundays Annual Celebration. Darlin Mikki is a philanthropist. Her works are funneled through two Non-profit organizations. You can Turn it Around is an organization that serves youth at risk, giving them alternatives to the streets. Think Tank Foundation serves brown and black communities through education and charities. She finally decided to ease from behind the curtain releasing true stories about her life. A strong personality beyond the lights earned her the most improved poet award and The Spoken Word lounge queen pen. She is a member of 3BM (Three Brothers and a Mic) and also a part of an entertainment group, Team At Ease. Hitting the mic running Darlin Mikki debuted her freshman EP "Hustla's Wife" in a production called feminine Fire which got rave reviews and headlined some of the most talented women in the game. There she acquired the label the Melanin Monroe of Spoken word! Looking ahead she is on the cover of SWL Magazine, featuring in her second season of Beast Women, now working on her sophomore album "BossN Up", and teaching poetry to the youth in the neighborhood where she was raised. Darlin Mikki says she gotta flame blazing her insides so keep an eye out for the melanin in the mic!

Dean Bowen



THE NETHERLANDS

Dean Bowen (1984) is dichter, performer en psychonaut. Hij houdt zich bezig met de dynamiek van de samengestelde identiteit en hoe deze zich verhoudt tot een politieke en maatschappelijke positionering. Zijn debuutbundel *Bokman* is lyrisch, bevlogen en woedend; een persoonlijke zoektocht die universele patronen blootlegt en vele stemmen aan het woord laat. Hij ontrafelt op magnifieke wijze zijn eigen rouw en grieven die zich op verschillende continenten afspelen. Daarbij rakelt hij vergeten geschiedenissen op en ontleedt hij de structuren die ons politiek onderdrukt houden. Hoe blijf je als individu overeind tussen al die mechanismen?

Dean Bowen publiceerde op de online platforms *Samplekanon* en *Hard//Hoofd* en in tijdschriften als *nY* en *Tirade* en *Revisor*. Zijn krachtige voordracht maakt hem een graag geziene gast bij verscheidene woordkunstpodia in zowel binnen- als buitenland. Het bracht hem naar Zuid-Afrika, de VS en later dit jaar naar Slowakije en Kenia. Bowen won de eerste Van Dale SPOKEN Award in de categorie poëzie en zijn debuut *Bokman*, werd genomineerd voor de C. Buddingh'-Prijs.

Dean Bowen (1984) is a poet, performer and psychonaut. He examines the dynamics of the composite identity and how this relates to a political and social positioning of the self. His debut collection, *Bokman* is Lyrical, Passionate and Furious; A Personal Quest aimed at revealing universal patterns, allowing many voices to speak. In stunning fashion, he unravels his own grief and grievances situated on different continents. In doing so, he uproots hidden histories and dissects the structures that sustain our oppressive political realities. How does one maintain themselves amidst all those mechanisms playing out?

Bowen published on the online platforms *Samplekanon* and *Hard//Hoofd* and in journals like *nY*, *Tirade* and *Revisor*. His poetry and powerful performance have seen him grace stages both nationally and internationally, bringing him to South-Africa, the US and later this year to Slovakia and Kenya. Bowen won the first ever Van Dale SPOKEN Award and his debut collection *Bokman* was nominated for the prestigious C. Buddingh' Award.



The crude hand

to prove wrong
this crude hand
bricks must not be remembered

footsteps archive personal histories
and the last years of a midnight plane

the alto breath of a planet lain to bed

suffocated acolyte
in the turning skies
the old man exhales in the evergreen

the old man in his southern constellation
still tells his tales to anything with beak
he does not comprehend the distinction between all
that roams
and he drinks

death in a wooden harness
all will ash
and boorish mythology

he does not know of what language he speaks
a lullaby daydream of a born day past

stigmata manifest of old world rhetoric and a mother
lost
the still radiant cheek of defiance
he knows his father' hand well

all things are imprints

-By Dean Bowen



NYANGARESI OMBUI DENIS



KENYA

Nyangaresi Ombui Denis is a poet and a literary scholar. Having been born in Kisii County, Nyanza region, Kenya in the year 1986, he went to Kiorori Primary school where he sat for his KCPE exam in the year 2001 and joined Gakero ELCK Secondary school in the following year completing his 'O' level in 2005 scoring a B+. Denis joined Kenyatta University for a Bachelor of Education degree specialising in English and Literature. Upon graduation in 2011, Ombui started teaching English and Literature at Gesabakwa high school and later Kisii School. Besides marking English and Literature paper three examination at the Kenya National Examination Council, Ombui has had training in drama and music while in the teaching profession. Ombui holds a masters degree in Literature and currently is enrolled for PhD in the same discipline. He teaches Oral Literature, East African prose and Poetry from West and South Africa in the department of Languages, Linguistics and

THE COUNTRY UNDER SIEGE

The cork chills on top
The young ones watching tap!
The wind blows with hope
The children watching agape!
Knowing that brighter is tomorrow

Who will restore them in count?
When suspicion reigns account
The west stressed with fingers
Like they allow the topping wingers
Who knows the game is won or lost?

It is our beloved coffers that we like
Liking with all black with our ilk
Together pushing to rest and enjoy our milk
That our gone-fathers intended in their like
Are we for sure surrendered and set for the pluck?

The chicken leading the chicks on expedition
The hawk flying in search of its redemption
All meaning with one target separated with intention
But hear one of them launching the interruption
That leaves the lower cursing with aggression.

Who will save the folks?
Will they be always on the walk?
What about the roads?
What about the boards?
Our prayer will save our country perhaps.

-By Nyangaresi Ombui Denis

WAR AS WE WERE

Priiiiiiii!.....priiii!
Do you hear that?
Rrrrrrii! ...rrrrrr!
Some have heard already and on the move
Tiiiiiiiiiitiiiiiiii!

Congestion reign our roads
Snail speed all over the way to our day
Is it Sarova Stanley that the snail has attacked?
Can you see the city centre getting clear any soon?
Traffic! Traffic! Traffic!

The sick singled out, wiping the blood from the accident
They did not leave the wrecked people on the scene
That pronounced two fatalities and four casualties
The hope that where they are heading is open
But the gate closes by the road invested with snail objects

This goes on and goes on in the air
Spaces going crazy with tiiiiiiiiii!
This mess can end with us adopting the ideas
Of having two wheeled moving objects like the west
To clear our dear roads for the fatalities and causalities to access

- By Nyangaresi Ombui Denis

Erlend Wichne



NORWAY

Erlend Wichne is a poet, translator, journal editor and research fellow in translations studies, from Norway. He lives in Oslo and in Kristiansand. He has published two books of poetry and two translations of French poetry. He is doing research on the translation of poetry into the Norwegian.



*show no signs
or patterns possible
to interpret other
than the fact that
I would get all scraped up*

Untitled Poem

My fishing knife is five incisions
through the stomach from anus to gill.
Shove the hand in, rip out the soft
and put the entrails on the rock.
Throw the head to the seagulls smack in
water
and pluck away bladder and membrane.
Use the knife to scrape the scales off
and cut away fins.
Glistening meat in sun
and glistening entrails,
glare from the knife and the sea.
Rinse hands and shoes,
wash away blood
and feel a real urge to swim.

*

if
the reflections disappeared
before
the eyes collapse
like two
visions
of
glass
two
of porcelain

*

Reverberation. Sidewalk in darkness

whistling to send sound through the night
fill up where nothing
is perceived

formulate the peep of
the bright world of
reflection

ooze futilely out
into nullity's balloon
bigger and bigger by each breath of frozen
smoke
from my oral cave

star-patterns like the Bigger Dipper
Orion's
sword and
the tree-crown that erases them
dissolves into heaven like sugar
in ink

nobody can name

the motionless constellations established
by the leaves and

during the last three steps
before the straightness of the trunk
hits me in the side does

1. the relative placement of the leaves and
2. the violent change in the relationship
between them
dependent on my vantage point
and 3. my glance up from under the middle of
the crown

show no signs
or patterns possible to interpret other
than the fact that I would get all scraped up

have found myself enveloped in a cloud of
stars
(of maple leaves)
if my foothold
disappeared and I ended up in free fall

up
out into the night
towards the real stars

Three poems by Erlend Wichne
Translations by the E.W. and Olivia Lasky

EVANS GESURA MECHA



KENYA

Evans Gesura Mecha is a Linguistics lecturer in Kisii University with a peripheral interest in poetry and its criticism. In past Kistrech Poetry events he has preferred a paper presentation over a poetry reading. He has a collection, *Coronach to Ophir and other Poems* which is due for release from Novum Publishers, and has a long stint of writing poetry which is yet to be made public. He has taught literature in High school for fourteen years (1998-2010) before transiting to university teaching.

Reading the Subliminal Worlds

Now that I have become astute in reading the world
In the eyes of an adult, losing a child's naive trust
Of things that seem, and the doctrinal snare of the past
With its ancestral cave paintings, heiroglyphics, or sayings
Imprinted on the tongue of wrinkled lips
I find an oedipal glass, reducing everything to lust:

I see the market woman, legs posted apart
And a face cast at the road,
What wares are being sold there?
The cyclist complains about morals
Without lacing his words with christened ire;
More like a confession of unseated desire.

Is the world driven by lust?
Are there none who seek what is just?

- By Evans Gesura Mecha

The Last Elder

I have wrought the tapestry of my heritage
On the walls of my castle, you will know my thoughts
By a mere glance at the artefacts of my dreams:
The walls are rounded to a stunted dome,
And conically-capped with thatch-like roofing,
This is the virtual preserve of all that is old
And genealogies of ancestry sleep well
When they spy on this mansion from Samani realms.
And now when driving through the rough county

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Rain pelting the unsheltered crone
I offer a lift to a hag, who spends the trip
Calling blessings on my head, giving me names
Such as 'Of-my-belly', 'bright eye'
And may you prosper, no stumbling on your way,
And see the grand-children of grandchildren

Then tears slowly trickle for joy and memory,
That maybe, with all that I now have
My parents should ride in the back-seat
And I secretly reading their joy on the mirror
Like a luscious wight send oediles
With side-glances to an endeared object.

And he finds satiety in rendering occult respect
A kind of spell to earn him more of its kind
From those around; but distress when it founders,
Like the zealot seeking miraculous deeds
And haunting churches with loud orisons

Now that time has sapped our virile pulses
To a dull waiting in a corridor, waiting for a call
Into another room, maybe to wait further,
And we sit as a mother on a stool
In our little kitchen, with embers of memory
Flickering into spurts of retelling-
The deeds retold getting more fragrant
In their twists, like an epical monster,
We have become the weavers of tales....

Then the pride of having worn many hats,
The hatters purse must have burst its seams!

And the paths, trod hard in those moments
Rife with desire borne of labour, rat race,
And the soles eaten more on the outer heel
Marking the poor feat of upright bearance;
And the unheaded tapping of the earth
With a walking stick, that insignia of elders,
And perhaps a fly whisk, toward the lord of flies.

-By Evans Gesura Mecha



Dorit Weisman



ISRAEL

Schnitzel

I separate the breast into pieces, sharpen a knife,
remove sinew fat cartilage
turn over the slice of breast roll out flatten
I feel the incision of lymph nodes under the armpit,
and the slight nicks in the "tail of the breast" and at
"twelve o'clock"

I remove a long white sinew
and think that with me they began with the lymph
nodes.

I am naked, covered by a sheet up to my chest,
then a long lengthwise incision.

I remove one more sinew from the chicken breast
I flatten the meat on a cutting board.

Slice after slice, I make preparations.

Slowly and calmly, attentively, all that's left is
to decide: bread crumbs or matza meal.

-By Dorit Weisman, Translation: 2006,
Rachel Yakobovitch

My Mother, 56 Years Later, Erzsébet-Park, Gödöllő, Hungary. With Leaves Fall- ing all Around

The years fell away from her,
as in a different, tougher poem
and there, on the tree-lined boulevard, she stepped
lightly, leaning
on her cane. Mom, I said to her, I want you
to run like a girl, to run on the boulevard,
I want to photograph you running on the boulevard,
but she didn't run, my mother, I photographed her
weeping,
the leaves falling all around her. Nothing has changed

Sestina for a cashier

Hershey's chocolate 7290000255903
729000287248 and 7290000135700
peach nectar and Chinese pickles
my daughter is wandering what is she doing
cracked olives 7290000046006
this cash register's broken, you have to enter everything
twice.

This week I worked my shifts twice
I want to go home before three
a large roll an empty bottle times six
turkey breast in marinade 7290002400
a feast this woman is making
a quarter of a chicken and Chinese pickles

Sitting here hours like a Chinese worker
bread and more bread that's twice
what am I doing what am I doing
another 729000035707 and more 729000035703
72964415 it all looks to me like zero
I'll go back home at six

That man acts like a child of six
everyone's taking the Chinese pickles
7290002706724, 7290002660200
Today I've seen this woman twice
and this time makes three
and for my husband what am I doing

Hot chocolate and a six pack of beer
with the new wrinkle what am I doing
I'm tired and I see double and triple
Chinese pickles Chinese pickles Chinese pickles
someone else is taking it twice
and inside my head is black and empty

7290002989943, 9290003067540
7290002415107 what is hot pepper doing
7290000046006 twice
7290000047362 times six
7290000457253 again Chinese pickles
7290002871248, 7290000135703

7290000135703 and two times zero
again these Chinese pickles what am I doing
I want to be a girl of six think twice.

-By Dorit Weisman, Translation from Hebrew to English:
Lisa Katz
From the book Normal, Publisher: Pardes, 2006



Isaac Adams Subo



KENYA

Isaac Adams Subo is currently pursuing his doctorate in Literature at Kisii University. He has a Masters in Literature from Mount Kenya University, an undergraduate degree from Egerton University, a Diploma in Education with a speciality in English and French. He is a long serving High School teacher, for five years he has served as associate lecturer in literature in a number of Kenyan Universities such as Mount Kenya University, The University of Nairobi, Kisii University and Maasai Mara University. He is passionate about poetry.

BUT WHY?

In the green perched homestead,
There sat grandma,
There sat grandpa,
Their eyes blankly staring into empty
space
Their paws on their chins,
Their mouths glued.

A deep and chilling apprehension
Well tucked in their hearts.
But for the four young children
Playing hide and seek in the backyard
All was silent.

A solid green roofed maisonette
Rested solidly on the green perch,
A disused Mercedes... too sat in the
shade,
But for the sadness and the despair,
Wrinkled the grannies faces.

I try to puzzle out...
Then... I discern...
The grannies eyes rest upon
Two solid red boils of fresh earth...,
That protrudes at the side of the house,
At their heads two epitaphs.

Then grandpa breaks the silence,
"Beneath those epitaphs rest our only
hope..
The sires of those children.

Now a tasty morsel for the maggots."
A tear drops from grandma's eyes
Involuntarily tears drop from my eyes,
As I draw my kerchief,
I pose to ask,
"Was it an accident?"
He responds...
"No my child,
They were scorched by the evil eye...
People are bad they abhor prosperity,
You know...

But deep down in my heart
I understand...
It is the big Dinosaur "UKIMWI,"
That was known to butcher pairs,
I pause to ask,
But why?
How long will the ignorance last?

-By Isaac Adams Subo

*A tear drops from
grandma's eyes
Involuntarily tears
drop from my eyes,...*

OH SUDAN

What are neighbours for
If not for times of trouble
What are relatives for
If not for mean times
Are but tested sayings.
For two decades
Terror's reign has thundered
Multitudes have lost their lives..
"Displaced"
Many have sought refuge across..
The border
Many innocent ones born in refuge..
Camps..
There they have known the embrac-
ing..
Heat of the camps as their homes.
Bombs and bullets whizz and whistle
Yearning for fresh blood
Them the fair
Them the endowed
Them the perpetrators.
They the black
They the underprivileged
They are the underdogs.
Captive they are in their own land
Slaves forced to serve
Shot at like dogs
War; bitter war
War cannot be the answer
Peace,... sweet peace
The ultimate solution

-By Isaac Adams Subo

Maria Mistrioti



GREECE

Maria Mistrioti was born in 1956 in Arcadia. She lives in Chalkida of Evia. She studied Social work and journalism. The source of her inspiration is mainly the Homeric Odyssey. She has published from the grand Greek Edition CACTUS, the following poetry compositions: "Approaches" (1985), "In the land of Laestrygonians" (1988), "In the Veins of Time" (1991), "The Wind and the Navigator" (1995), "Here we sail in" (2003), "My Homecoming" in Greek/Polish language (2005), by poet and translator Pawel Krupka. "The night is close... Vergina" editions (2017) one poetry composition (2019) in Greek/Polish languages by University professor Libor Martinek.

Maria Mistrioti was honored by the prefecture of Evia and the Municipality of Chalkida with a special diploma and the mental "Nikolaos Kriezotis" for her cultural contribution to Evia.

In 2004, during the Olympic Games in Athens, she was awarded the state Prize Medal and a special diploma by the Polish Ministry of Culture at the request of the Polish Ambassador to Greece at that time, Grzegorz Diemidowicz. The prize awarded by Aleksander Kwasniewski, who was the President of the Republic of Poland, for her contribution to Polish culture and the development of cultural relations between Poland and Greece. Maria Mistrioti was also awarded with the following prizes: "Stanislaw Stasic" (Poland 1999) and "Nikos Hadzinikolaou" (Poland 2017). In April 2019, during the international poetry festival in Chalkida, Maria Mistrioti was awarded with Medal "HOMER" and a special diploma by University professor and president of "the European Medal of poetry and Art", Dr. Dariusz Tomasz Lebioda. She was also awarded with the International Prize "IANICIUS" by Professor and Poet Dariusz Tomasz Lebioda.

Her poems are translated to English, Italian, Polish, Czech, Romanian, Russian and Chinese. Also in 2019 some of her poems were translated to Arabic by University professor and poet, Dr. Hatif Janabi.

Maria Mistrioti is a full member of the Greek Literary Society and a member of the new members judging committee. She is also the organizer of International poetry festivals in Greece.



WIND AND NAVIGATOR –extract –

Edition CACTUS 1995

" So when we had made fast all the tackling throughout the ship,
we sat down, and the wind and the helms man made straight
her course "

[Odyssey, I, ver. 9- 11]

I have not yet abandoned the myths
I try to write you a few words
In the way the effort is made to stitch
The bleeding flesh

So I will bring
the first word close to the last one
and I will send you this letter
as a bitter kiss
Between our distances

I am writing to you with rather simple words
and I would like to talk to you
about those
who travel through puzzles
through smokes of very bitter seas
Who respond in the nights
to the crying of the mermaid
and search for the other side of things

IN THE LAND OF LAESTRYGONIANS – extract –1988

Maybe someday we will talk
about trains which did not leave letters
About ships which lost the desire for return
Or even
About the young night watchman who insists on whistling
When the dusk loots the day

MARTHA BRENDA MUSYA



KENYA

Inaudible Love

The sun sets and goes its way
Chaos of life erupt
Goats bleat from exhaustion
Birds slumber as light fades away

Darkness envelopes everything
And alive comes the night
With crickets chirping
Bats screeching, owls hooting

The moon peeps out from the clouds
Casting its soothing light on earth
Making the dogs to howl
With their muzzles to the sky

Up the sky, like a black paper
Covered in white dust
Are the stars twinkling
With such hypnotic beauty

- By Martha Brenda Musya

Letting Go

I didn't know how much you meant,
Until away you went,
Taking away the little dreams I had,
And leaving me stunned beyond reaction.

When you said you loved me,
I believed you with my whole heart,
In return loved you with more than the
heart,
You were my sunshine in this dark world.

You brought joy to my life,
More than I thought possible,
Smiles never faded from my face,
Until you decided I wasn't the one.

It was more than enough,
To have you to turn to,
But now I got no one by my side,
To comfort and hold me in sorrow.

Now I'm struggling with my demons,
Trying to go on with life,
It's like saving myself from quicksand,
It's not that simple to let go.

- By Martha Brenda Musya

NYAGAKA A. NYAMWANGE



KENYA

Born in 1968 in Kisii County, Western Kenya, Alfred went to Mokorogoinwa Primary, Kiomiti and Nyamwagwa Secondary schools before joining Kisii High for his A levels. His dream was to become a lawyer but ended up doing BA in Literature, Political Science and Anthropology at the University of Nairobi. After 6 years of 'tarmacking', that's job hunting, he decided to join high school to teach English and Literature. He registered for a PGDE diploma at Kenyatta University in 1998. In 2013 he graduated with a MEL from Kampala University and has worked as a part time lecturer and teacher mentor for Kisii University and Kenyatta University respectively. He is an educator, writer, community development supporter, church leader and enthusiast of music and drama. He loves making friends, supporting educational initiatives with bias to English and Literature. He has written several unpublished stories, novellas, poems and plays, and has published articles in various local papers. He also contributes articles to academic journals and international forums. He is currently pursuing a PhD in literature at Kisii University. Married to Caren Moraa, Alfred is blessed with three children, namely, Sasha a nursing third year student, Masha an education student and Timon a high school final year candidate.

The Girl of Red Beauty

(Omoiseke Nya'Kieni Kebariri)

Come girl of red beauty, the light complexioned one,
You whose face shines in darkness;
The face that no serious man can ever miss!
Your eyes shine with love,
Your lips are full with the ripeness of a banana.
And the teeth are of the white of mushrooms!
Girl you kill me, you score my heart
I miss a beat just at your sight!
Worse when I espy hovering about you several warriors
Heart-sick with love for you
I know you have sparked full length panic in the land.
Isn't every young man searching
The hand of the girl of red beauty?
The cows set ready only need your consent
So that they can sway their humps
To your father's homestead.
Oh girl of red beauty!
Your nose stands steady,
Your neck long and tall,
Your shoulders round and curved from omotembe, softwood
Your back straight and alert
Your steps heavy; announcing your presence.

Like those hills curved tops
Roundy mounds are your breasts;
A chest heavy strung with
Their ripeness and firmness
That beckons at the other clan's cattle;
Pointed and shimmying

- By Nyagaka A. Nyamwange

Professor Imali Abala



USA

Imali J. Abala is a professor of English at Ohio Dominican University (USA) where she teaches literature, creative writing, and college writing courses. She is a published author of many books: *The Dreamer* (which won her a nomination for the distinguished Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature in 2017), *Haughty Boys of Ngoroke*, *Moody Mood and Red Round Ball*, *Drum Bits of Terror*, *A Fallen Citadel* (a collection of poetry), *The Dilemma of Jahenda: The Teenage Mother*, and *The Disinherited and Move on Trufosa*. Some of her other works (poetry and short stories) have also appeared in several anthologies in the USA and Uganda.



A Tiff of Rebellion

He spoke to me in an angry booming voice
Ministering to my sinful soul in need of grace
Aware heaven was surely where I belonged
Not Hades, haven for earth's wretched sole souls

Ministering to my sinful soul in need of grace
Father prayed daily to reel me from my evil ways
Away from Hades, a haven for earth's wretched souls
Which wasn't a place for a minister's daughter

Father prayed daily to reel me from my evil ways
But my youthful defiance fueled my revolt, for
Hades wasn't a place for a minister's daughter
Only the fiery chariots of glory to which I belonged

With my youthful defiance fueling my revolt
I dyed my lips bloody red and clog-shoed to the pew
For the fiery chariots of glory weren't meant for me
Dismayed by my revolt, Father's eyes blazed his fury

I dyed my lips bloody red and clog-shoed to the pew
My crimson red stained nails like a slut's were a sight
Dread filled by my revolt, Father's eyes blazed his fury
As his hurt heart bled his rage; my tiff a cry for prayers

My crimson red stained nails like a slut's were a sight
I had turned into Lucifer, God's fallen-prideful angel
His hurt heart bled his rage as he prayed for my soul
Aware I needed God's tender mercies to get to heaven

I had turned into Lucifer, God's fallen-prideful angel
And Dad, aware heaven was surely where I belonged,
His hurt heart bled his rage as he prayed for my soul
He spoke to me in an angry booming voice

- By Imali Abala

"Unfaith" Living

They sneer at me for my assumed unfaith
Unaware my life's roots are faith grounded
For the zeal of my living in the now is Truth

They put me on carpet as if I am a lost sheep
Yet, haven't they fallen victim to false truths
Reneged on the tangible for intangible truths?

They think I know nothing about their God
Unaware my God is as uplifting as their God
The very being who in me and in them lives

They reach for the splinter they see in my eyes
Yet, they see not the logs in their very own eyes
So they sow discordant seeds, not love and peace

They slander me for living in my moment's inertia
Yet, this moment is more valid than their inertia
Their inhaled opium of an elusive blissful living

They pledge their undying prayers for my soul
Destined to burn in everlasting fire for my follies
Unaware their virtuous mien is their damnation

They pray for blinding light to strike me and live
Like a stricken Paul bent to persecute the innocent
Yet, whom in my unfaith living do I persecute?

So please, halt the haughtiness of your tongues
Harness the goodness in our humanity and live
Lest you burn in the hell fire of your insolence!

- By Imali Abala



Njeri Wangari – Wanjohi



KENYA

Njeri is a 'Poet extraordinaire' and arguably Africa's first poetry blog pioneer. She started her career as a blogging spoken word poet in 2004 and has been running kenyanpoet.com to publish her poetry and her writing on Arts & Culture in Africa. Her poetry has been presented across Africa, Asia, North and South America.

She represents Kenya's first generation of contemporary poets and spoken word artists and is one of Kenya's pioneer bloggers and spoken word artists. She co-founded Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE) where she served as the Direct of Training & Outreach.

She is the author of *Mine and Mind Fields*; *My Spoken Words*, a 114 paged book which contains over 40 poems that explore themes on Urban Blues, Love, Identity, Traditions, Cultural changes, Exploitation and Politics among others.

Hailed among the most talented Kenyan poets and performers, she has come to be known as the voice of reason and change in the Kenyan poetry circles due to the content and theme of her poems which range from Culture, religion, human rights, technology and everyday challenges in the Kenyan society.

Having written poetry since 2004 and performing since 2007 she has slowly grown into the person she is today.

With a career spanning over 15 years, she has a background and passion in marketing, new media, communications and digital storytelling. Her writing which focuses on technology, new media, Arts and Culture in Africa has appeared on various regional and global publications.

A self-confessed Afrocentric, Njeri thrives in the live cultural scene and the outdoors hiking or running.

Words and guns

which yields more power?
with words
i can create a world
where guns and bullets
are like suns and droplets
I can call into being
the spirits of our forefathers
Open your eyes to a time
before the first man
before the railway lines
for before the world was
the word still was.
With words
I can turn the pages
to a time
before the sunrise of my being
step into worlds I have never been
Touch and not feel the sting of a bee
imagine a world that will never be

for with words
i can create and let it be.
With words
I can create playgrounds
in concrete jungles
where kids can touch the grass
and throw marbles
stories of heroes
gone and living
Grow boys to men
girls to women
for with words
destiny
will be what they set
Not
what they spell
With words on a page
minds bow at our feet

- By Njeri Wangari - Wanjohi



Professor Libor Martinek



CZECH REPUBLIC

Martinek was born on 15th January 1965 in Krnov, Czech Republic (Europe). He studied at the Pedagogical Faculty of the Palacky University in Olomouc (1984-1989, Czech language and literature plus musicology), then taught at the Pedagogical High-School in Krnov. Since 1993 he has been working at the Institute of Bohemistics and Librarianship at the Faculty of Philosophy and Science of the Silesian University in Opava.

Since 2012, he has been working as a professor at Wrocław University in Wrocław, Poland. He deals with literary history and theory, literary comparative, literature and music relations, translation theory and practice.

Prof. Libor Martinek is a member of the Writers' Association of the Czech Republic, the Czech PEN Club, the Czech Translators' Association and the President of the Opava Branch of the Literary Society of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Since 2001 he has been living in Opava. He has published his poems, studies, reviews and translations in daily newspapers, professional literary and cultural-social journals in his own country and in Europe and the Middle East. He has also contributed poems to a number of Czech, Polish and Slovak anthologies, collections and almanacs. He himself was editor of several thematic poetry almanacs and anthologies.

He works with Czech Radio 3 (the Vltava station) and the Radio Vatican (the Czech section) where he translates from the Polish literature both fiction and professional works.

He is the author of several professional books on the literature of national minorities in Central Europe, as well as the history of Czech literature or musical works (among others Fryderyk Chopin). His poetry first *Co patří Večerníci - Sekrety Gwiazdy Wieczornej* (Engl. "What belongs to Evening star – Secrets of Evening star"; 2001) was awarded at XXIV. International Poetry November in Poznań, Poland, as the best poet's debut of the year. Also his second collection of poems *Jsi mým Signifié - Jesteś moim Signifié* ("You Are My Signifié"; 2012), is bilingual, Czech-Polish. He is currently preparing a collection of poems *Africké imprese* ("African Impression").

He received the Prize of the Polish Committee of UNESCO for translations of Polish poetry abroad (2004), the Prize for the Development of Czech-Polish Literary Activities, awarded by the Statutory City of Opava (2004), is a laureate of XXVI Warsaw Poetry Autumn for Translating and Popularizing Polish Poetry Abroad (1997), Bronze Medal of Silesian University "For Extraordinary Publications" (2009), Franz Kafka Medal of the European Circle (2010), Władysław Broniewski Prize (Warsaw 2010), London Literary Award (Union of Polish Writers Abroad in London 2018), The European Medal of Poetry and Art HOMER (Brussels 2019), Prize of Rector of the University of Wrocław for the scientific results achieved in 2015 and also in 2016.

He is the author of several professional books on the literature of national minorities in Central Europe, as well as the history of Czech literature or musical works (among others Fryderyk Chopin).

August variation

Motto: Water is a wet flame
(Novalis)

At the end of summer
the water in the river Opavice
is mercilessly cool

a cold wind is blowing from the North
and in the air you can feel
the oncoming fall

Birds have picked the last cherries
street vendors are selling ripe melons
along the fences blackberries are ripening

Lovers on the river bank
are looking for shelter
under a railway bridge

Lindens have shed their blossoms
languid bees have put away their last honey
into honeycombs

We are now one summer older
but not any wiser

At the end of summer I am losing you
in my dreams
in reality

-By Libor Martinek



Robert Yeo



SINGAPORE

Robert Yeo, born in 1940, has publications and performances in poetry, plays, fiction, essays, autobiography and libretto. In poetry he has 5 books, including *The Best of Robert Yeo*, 2012. His poems are widely published in his native Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. His best-known plays are found in *The Singapore Trilogy*, a triad of political plays. His memoirs is entitled *Routes A Singaporean Memoir 1940-75*, second edition 2014. His latest book is a play, *The Eye of History*, published in 2016. He is working on his memoirs volume 2. He won the Southeast Asia Writers Award in 2011



Work

I like to see the day pick
Up the day and pack it up,
Sign, staple, clip, dispatch.
Close the drawer, not the dream.

The ink of work splurges
And dries the pen.
Its seepage into dreams
Flushes through sewers.
Lick your stamp but not your boss.

(By Robert Yeo. The poem was published in *Softglow* e journal of poetry in Singapore.)

*He is working on his
memoirs volume 2.
He won the Southeast
Asia Writers Award
in 2011*



Rosemarie Wilson

a.k.a. One Single Rose



USA

Rosemarie Wilson a.k.a. One Single Rose, is an award winning poet and playwright, spoken word artist, singer, actress, filmmaker and author of three self-published poetry collections including nice and naughty chapbooks. Rosemarie is a Davenport University graduate, nine time National Poetry Award (NPA) nominee, 2010 recipient of the NPA's New & Upcoming Poet, Poetry Author of the Year award and her CD Poetic Truth was voted 2015 Spoken Word/Poetry Album of the Year. She is a four time Who's Who in Black Detroit

honoree, first place and three time honorable mention recipient of the Detroit Writers' Guild Paul Laurence Dunbar Poetry Contest, 2012 SAFE (Sisters Acquiring Financial Empowerment) Ambassador Award recipient, SVMixMedia.com's 2012 Performance Artist of the Year, Detroit Metro Times' reader's choice 2014/2015 Best Local Poet and she was nominated in the 2014 Spoken Word Billboard Awards. Upon entering a slam competition for the first time at the Motown Museum in Detroit, Rosemarie was named Motown Mic 2014 Performance Artist of the Year. In 2011, Rosemarie debuted as an actor in Detroit. She has since performed both nationally and internationally in a few amazing productions. A few of her notable performances include the Floacist's Flovertex and Sidewalk Festivals of the Performing Arts in Detroit, MI, the Kistrech Poetry Festival in Kisii and Nairobi, Kenya, the Piton International Film Festival in St. Lucia as well as touring Europe in 2012. She is currently a featured artist and songwriter with Defected Records, the United Kingdom's #1 house music record label. Her poetry is published with Broadside-Lotus Press, two of the oldest African-American presses in the United States, Inner Child Press, Night Ballet Press, Crisis Chronicles Press and Writing Knights Press. For four years Rosemarie hosted the Spotlight open mic poetry series in Detroit every 1st and 3rd Friday at Manila Bay Café, which was named 2014 Open Mic of the Year by the NPA's and Detroit Metro Times' reader's choice 2015 Best Open Mic.

Love Rose

A rose grew up from the concrete;
burst through earth like a Phoenix
standing tall,
poised perfectly to flourish in sun
or shade.
Its beauty seared into psyches of creatures
that supposedly find love at first sight.
Petals soft as cotton
emit fragrant aromas summoning visitors
that bear peace offerings to woo secrets away
from inside the rosebud's walls.
Great Pretenders fake the funk
exposing their true colors once the rose blooms,
deflowering its innocence
by clipping just above that fifth leaf.
Roses eventually wilt if left unattended on a shelf,
but bounce back resilient to breed new life on the vine.

Thorns hidden in the bush prick unwelcomed guests
leaving marks
demanding respect,
never to be forgotten
as thieves don't ever leave their presence unscathed.
Even beautiful flowers possess defense mechanisms
which is why I don't cut roses from the garden anymore.
They too deserve a chance to flourish
happily
ever
after.

By Rosemarie Wilson, aka One Single Rose
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Dr. Tsippy Levin Byron



Dr. Tsippy Levin Byron is a poet, editor and translator of poetry.

She has published seven full length poetry books as well as a book of prose, which is an academic research about literary identity. Her poetry has been translated into four different languages and published in literary magazines and anthologies. Levin Byron performs her poetry on different stages in Israel and around the world. She was awarded three poetry awards, one academic award and two scholarships for her works.

Complimentary critiques have been published in the literary sections of the main Israeli daily newspapers and radio. Besides her literary work, Levin Byron is a lecturer and researcher of literature. She has taught in universities in Israel as well as in India, Italy and Australia in the fields of literature and biblical studies. Levin Byron was ordained in 2006 as a secular rabbi (communal leader). Tsippy was born in Tel-Aviv in 1955. She has four children and lives in the Tel-Aviv vicinity, Israel.

Her books in Hebrew includes, Treasures Hidden in the Sand , Eked, 1995; Gut Reading, HakibbutzHaMeuchad, 2000; Soft Cover, HakibbutzHaMeuchad/ Rythmus, 2006; The Theory of Relativity for the Pineapple, HakibbutzHaMeuchad/ Rythmus, 2010; and The Revelation of the Northern Reindeer, HakibbutzHaMeuchad, 2018

Her books in English includes Lucid Words, Poetry Walla, Mumbai 2013 (translated into Bengali and in process of translation to Odisha) and Let Me In, Copper Coin, Delhi 2019 (Sponsored by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs) Her book in prose titled Taking Tigers Out For a Walk, HakibbutzHaMeuchad 2016.

Postcards from India Because of a Wind

Columbus wanted to reach India.
A chance shift of a wind carried him away to
America.
His men looted the gold of that land
Which had not yet discovered the secret of
gun powder.
The people of India also rolled stones and
boiled oil
But the Sons of Spain were engrossed far
away in their plundering.
And India was saved.

The Theory of Relativity for The Pineapple

In Meghalaya, the pineapple is sweeter than in Kerala
But its rind is spare of fibre.
You cannot produce rope from it.
The farmer says: Sweetness softens the fruit
And weakens its threads.
- By Dr. Tsippy Levin Byron

Besides her literary work, **Levin Byron is a lecturer and researcher of literature.** She has taught in universities in Israel as well as in India, Italy and Australia in the fields of literature and biblical studies.

On the first day the Maharajah was created.
His glow lit up the world.

On the second day the Brahmins were created.
They divided the waters above from the waters below,
Extracted for themselves stars and stretched heavens.

On the third day the warriors were created.
They inherited all the lands and the ashes.

On the fourth day the merchants were created.
They invented 170 languages,
Quarried veins of silver,
Sifted gold dust from the water,
Imposing forged stones into their scales.

On that day they imported chain-collared slaves
from the Sahara
To grow towers and forts.

On the fifth day the servants were created.
And the guards implanted in their shackles.
They started waking the gods.

Beneath them were the sweepers
With their heads between their knees,
And those who crawled on the earth with a bunch
of twigs.
Beneath them were the people who worked in the
gutters

On the side of the road,
And those who harnessed themselves to carts
To carry passengers and weights.
They also blessed the gods with a great roar
because

Beneath them were the trash diggers
Who were happy as well because
Beneath them were crossroad beggars,
And they were also happy with their share
Because beneath them were the wretched
Who had no voice, nor strength to beg.
And beneath them there are more bottom rungs
That I see not, I see not,
I know not a thing about them.

On the sixth day the animals were created.
Adorned with jasmines and daisies
He is thrown to the sea at Ganpathy.

On that day, the holy cow was created.
She eats from the stands in the market
Drools divine juice of apathy.
And Hanuman the monkey who jumps all day long
Like my unstrained thoughts during Yoga.
And the peacocks with their heavy tails of pride
That prevent them from flying.
Like the sari paloo, the burden of heritage,
On the women's backs.

*They
started
waking
the gods.
Beneath
them
were the
sweepers
With
their
heads
between
their
knees,
And
those who
crawled
on the
earth
with a
bunch of
twigs.*

On that day the camels of Rajasthan were created.
With their double empty humps – a bent spine
Of pain and persistence –
To cross the desert alive.

And the horse and its rider were created together
Like the binary choice in India: to bear or to be
borne,

And the slippery decline in between them.
And the cobra whose hatred of the flute player,
Dormant in the basket,
Awakes to limit itself in the dance.
And the big parrot emerged from the darkness of
the first egg,
To read the signs and scream the future.

On the seventh day nothing had yet been accomplished.

Mist came up from the Earth
And was slowly trapped in the fanning pankha.
Everything was chaos and plans
With budgets dissolving into bribery.
My Maharajah hovered in the lotus position,
Tasted a bit of the Chutney
Complained angrily,
Spitting a declaration, that it was not good.*

Jyoty is twelve years old.
She has no breasts yet.
Her drooped shoulders hide the key to her heart.
She has a button-nose breathing in suppression
Breathing out submission,
And swollen palms
Eaten away by detergents.
The pink inside of her hand is not of a child
anymore.

She gives a squashed sideways glance
To see who walks above her.
Worn out plastic slippers insulate her legs
From the disease-soaked earth.

Black under the nails between her fingers, and in
her eyes.

When she empties the holy waters
From the ladies' feet,
Her beauty remains a shouting blink in the beauty
parlour.

Her master thinks she has no need for school.
What is needed for her life she has already learnt.

-By Dr. Tsippy Levin Byron



Peter K Saisi



KENYA

Peter K Saisi is a student of Literature & Linguistics at Maseno University. He is the co-founder of El Voyage ink, an art collective running since 2016, bringing together up and coming artists. He is also an actor, script writer and stage director. He has written, directed and produced various Plays and Poetry showcases in Kisumu, Maseno and Nairobi through his El Voyage ink outfit. (El Voyage - Edition 1&2, 2016, The Oral Blend - 2017, Shakespeare Meets Africa- 2018 Mohammed with The Bibl-2019). He now prepares his first one man Poetry showcase titled NAKED in 2020. A show dedicated to addressing Mental Health. He has published his first poetry collection titled Scarred, collection of poems reflecting the inner struggles of the soul; trying to find meaning out of the pains of life, seeking out God and learning to love in its purest form. The poems are personal and heartfelt.

Poetry Is...

Poetry is Courage.
It is the shamelessness to blatantly
Expose your nudity to the world!
It is the ability to strip your person
Straight to the bone of your soul!
It is Weakness!
It is the knack to soak your skin in a pool of words,
And wring it into the ears of the world!

It is Peace.
It is the foolishness to trust
Your torn form will be sewn together,
By the endless stinging of your pen's nib!

It is Death.
It is Blindness
To blood-stained letters!
It is Prison.
It is Fear of sentences
Chaining your conscience!

It is Life.
Pain immortalized!
Words burn worse than hell fire!
Full stops can't end it!
Brackets can't cage it and Commas won't hold it!
It roars on... rumbles through the pages...
It won't stop!
Till it hazes down the alphabet, whole!
Brick by brick... 26 to ashes...
What remains then?
Emptiness...

- By Peter K Saisi

Sunrise

Dark of dawn...
Tears flow, smiles dry!
Worried eyes, skins tired...
Ears drowned,
By the constant drumming
Of the wickedness of life!

Bones knock over each other in fear!
Muscles sag in vengeful expectation!
Lips cry out for the dawning of dusk!
Hands hasten to trap hope
The last surviving ounce!
With curling toes and fisted palms!
Hearts beat in the rhythm of the unmusical
crickets...

It shall rise again!
Eyes forever trained on the west,
Come soon!
Clothed in the power of your Majesty,
And the Glory of the Sunrise!
And this darkness,
Shall nay be forever!

- By Peter K Saisi

THOMAS BOBERG



DENMARK

Born in 1960 Thomas had his Literary debut in 1984 with the poetry collection, *Hvæsendepåmitøjekast* (Hissing at my glance). He has since produced a number of volumes, of which the first ten have been published in two inexpensive editions: *I firserne* (in the Eighties) and *I halvfemserne* (in the Nineties). *Livsstil* (Life Style), his twelfth collection, published in 2005, won the nomination for the Literary Prize of the Nordic Council. Boberg has travelled widely – in the United States, India, Italy, Spain, Central and Northern Europe, and South America – and written travel books: *Sølvtråden: Rejseminder* 1996 (The Silver Thread: Travel Memoirs), *Americas* 1999 (Americas), which won him a nomination for the Literary Prize of the Nordic Council, and *Invitation til at rejse* 2003 (Invitation to a Journey). In 2012 he published a fourth volume of Travel Memoirs *I den næste by: rejseminder* (In the next town), that year he also received the big Danish academy prize. He lived in Spain for 4 years and in Peru for 14 years, returning to Denmark in the year of 2004. Recently he published *Hesteæder* - trilogy (The Horseeater trilogy) – a long partly satirical epic poem dealing with the clash of cultures and religion and the apocalypse, in 2015 published in Spain and Mexico. In 2017 he published *Mexicocity-digte* (Mexicocitypoems). In 2019 he published *Africana*, a travel novel. His poems have also been translated into Swedish, Spanish, English, German and French.



LETTER FROM A TOURIST

I seek
the perfect place in the house
running incessantly around the block
after the white room with the cool wind
I've been hunting for my whole life.
I am free to board a barrel
and get smashed up under the bloom of the
Southern Cross against
some
plundered guano isle in the ember-beaming
ocean.
Bound thus in a dilemma
that merely augments the tension of the
sphere
between the basic conditions of the cell
and the blue space of the bird;
and with all we know today silence
naturally comes closest.
If the arrow doesn't
aim at the farthest point,
and there is no center
but air and earth, essences, water
and moreover people
when someone learns he has a cut above the
brow

and a sentence between the bars and
infinity
the fall is hardly avoided
down in a spectacular drawing of the
shoulders
just as it wasn't worth it
for the shame would survive us?
and the swans when they float past The
French Cafe,
singing...
and the elephant on the way out of the
picture, the impala, the giraffe,
the ostrich,
and the word
when it no longer airs our unbelief?
Someplace in Zimbabwe there is a person
about to
rouse a sleeping spirit.
A whirl of banshees over the Kalahari of
catatonia
dancing dust devils
and the rhinoceros rises in a swami of
egrets
while the air is pierced by bullets
the baobab tree rips itself up by the
roots,
for now it wants to leave.

But I am also an alien
and you in your own land fleeing
something evil on earth
fugitive
under the sun
that every morning squanders its letters
of light
seen from freedom's high view
and all day through
in under the iron doors
making the tin bowls warp in the heat.
Down here
we begin dreaming
especially when twilight comes creeping
especially we fantasize about winter
especially when it gets later
and we notice it is too late for all the
fantasizing
here with the rope around our neck
and the bag over our head
and the earth in a moment
being heaved away beneath our feet.

- By Thomas Boberg,
Translated by Verne Moberg.
(From the book *Under the Dog Star*
1997)



Dr. Zhao Si



CHINA

Chinese poet, essayist, translator, poetic scholar, editor, Ph.D. Zhao Si (b. 1972) is the author or translator of 11 books, including *White Crow* (Poems, 2005), *Gold-in-Sand Picker* (Prose Poems, 2005), *Disappearing, Recalling: 2009–2014 New Selected Poems* (2016), which won the "2014 Major Support Project" by China Writers Association, *Matchstick Man* (New York, 2017, nominated for 42 Pushcart Poetry Prize), *Zmiznutia a návraty* (Bratislava, 2018, the first contemporary Chinese poet's book published in Slovakia), two poetry books of Tomaž Šalamun (both 400+ pages each): *Light-Blue-Pillow Tower* (2014) and *The Enormous Boiling Mouths of the Sun* (2016), Edmond Jabès: *Complete Poems* (one of two translators, 2019), and selected works by others: Hart Crane (US), Ted Hughes (UK), Vladimír Holan (Czech), Yannis Ritsos (Greece), et al. Some of her poems have been translated into 16 languages and published worldwide. She is a frequent guest in different international poetry festivals held in Europe and Asia. She works for *Poetry Periodical*, the top poetry magazine in China and is the Executive Editor-in-Chief of the prestigious poetry translation series *Contemporary International Poetry*. She was awarded Polish Marii Konopnickiej Poetry Prize in 2012. Being an Orion Visiting Artist in University of Victoria, Canada, in 2017. From 2017, she is the Vice-President of European Medal of Poetry and Art – HOMER. She lives in Beijing.

赵四，诗人、译者、诗学学者、编辑。文学博士（中国社科院）、博士后。在海内外出版有十余种著作，包括诗集《白乌鸦》《消失，记忆：2009-2014新诗选》，小品文集《拣沙者》，译诗集萨拉蒙大型诗选两种《蓝光枕之塔》《太阳沸腾的众口》，《埃德蒙·雅贝斯：诗全集》（合译）等。另发表有诸多学术论文、原创诗、文、译诗、译文。有部分诗作被译为英、西、法、德、俄、波、荷等16种语言并发表，其斯洛伐克语诗集《出离与返归》是斯语中第一本中国当代诗人诗选。应邀参加在世界多地举办的国际诗歌节、文学节。获波兰玛利亚·科诺普尼茨卡奖，美国著名“手推车诗歌奖”（第42届）提名等，是加拿大维多利亚大学2017-2018年度访问艺术家。目前在《诗刊》供职，同时任《当代国际诗坛》副主编、编委，2017年始，加入欧洲荷马诗歌&文艺奖章评委会，任副主席

She was
awarded
Polish Marii
Konopnickiej
Poetry Prize in
2012.

——为大屠杀死难者

我听见，我听见掉进混乱与惊恐的人群
掠起群集的雨乌鸦，大笑，成群的大笑飞过
撞着哭墙。胜利的业火口含利刃
切割叹息，一片，两片，羽毛飞舞
你出现，出现在漫天大雪中
你们所无法想象的事物出现，时间到了
白色的血滴滴溅起，雪花中最亮的朵朵
我看见，我看见你的大苦之心鼓胀，鼓胀
轰然而出的天使，一边敛紧他尚不熟悉的大翼翅的根部，顶住从你的内心吹出的风口
一边用尖嘴喙低头凿开偌大的石化世界
已经僵硬的你，如此巨大的叹息矗立内燃
一堵火墙，一堵火墙阴湿地燃烧，冒着
苦涩的白烟坍塌，埋下，埋下永恒叹息

SIGHS

(for all the slaughter victims)

I hear, I hear the flock of rain, crowing, rushing out of stirred crowds of chaos and fright, sweeping past, laughing, roars of laughter crashing into the Wailing Wall. Triumphant karma holds a sharp blade in its mouth and slices the sigh into pieces; one piece, two pieces, feathers flutter, dancing. You emerge, among the whirling sleet. What is beyond mortal imagination arises. It's time, drops of white blood splash, the brightest blossom of solid snowflakes. I see, I see your heart of great suffering swells up, up till an angel thunders out, and he flexes up the roots of his not-yet-familiar large wings, pressing against the gust blowing from an emptiness in the heart, then bows his head to peck such an immense, petrified world with his sharp beak. An already rigid You, giant sigh, stands upright, burning inside. A fire wall, a wall of fire burns darkly and damply, smoking palely and bitterly, collapses, buries, buries the eternal sighs.

-By Dr. Zhao Si, ©
English translation: Xuan Yuan, Tim Lilburn & the author



Peter Nyansera bw'Otieno



KENYA

Peter Nyansera bw'Otieno is a PhD candidate, a poet, linguist and researcher in the department of Languages, Linguistics and Literature at Kisii University. He teaches undergraduate courses in areas of general linguistics, phonetics and phonology and communication skills. Otieno's research interests are on language description and documentation, particularly from the acoustic phonetics perspective and socio-phonetics. He writes poems and short stories in EkeGusii (his native tongue), Kiswahili and English.

Ekerero.

Ekeene 'gekorura
Ko 'makweri 'makendu
Gakiakorire Kebariri obeire nyamwamire
Tangori tata 'ngesire
Mbarage mbaragere nonya ngesona kegotwa
Bwogee goanchara amatinde chimboba

'nki akorera iga gose?
'nkia 'korera iga gose?
Atare koba isase gose motienyi?
Kogwa naende oboka
Okina okina naende okea okea

Okara 'mwanaigwa,
Makweri maoncha,
Ngeita akorigia nabinde mosieka
Tiga taa!
Boina mbori kina mbabachi abora,
Bagotu basemberwe.

Dirge.

Truth can be crude and cruel
Death is cold and callous
Making the brown one be black as soot
I would that my father were like a hoe head,
When wasted it can be sharpened back, on the veranda when
it rains,
Sharp enough to dig where millet is harvested

Why has he done it, why?
Why has he done it, why?
I would that he were the sun or the moon,
To die and to rise again
To be small and big and small and big over and over

Listen, my child,
Death is a hunter,
Looking for an entry; close doors.
What a loss!
The grave has no judgement, we only miss wings
To be with the wise often times.



Sona Van



| USA

Sona Van, poet/ essayist is an Armenian medical school graduate who later received a master's degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Santa Monica in USA. She spent nearly fifteen years of her early career as one of the pioneer AIDS researchers at Kaiser Hospital, Los Angeles. Later, with her husband, Dr. Noobar Janoian, Sona Van founded All For Health -- a non-profit medical group which has grown to encompass fourteen different locations providing free healthcare to the indigent population of Los Angeles and its surrounding communities. She is also a sustaining member and contributor to one of the first Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation centers to be established in her native country, Armenia. Despite her significant devotion to healthcare and mental health, nowadays, she is best known for, and most significantly involved in her literary career. She is the author of seven books of poetry that have been translated into fourteen different languages around the world by renowned authors and literary icons of their respective nations. Sona Van is the recipient of several accolades in honor of her work. She is particularly revered in her homeland, having been awarded the Nation's most prestigious honors bestowed upon a writer. These include the Gold Medals awarded by the Ministry of Culture and the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora; the gold medal from the Golden Apricot Film Festival and the highest Presidential Honor, the "Movses Khorenatsi Medal" for her contribution in preserving the Armenian identity abroad. Her local Glendale Chamber of Commerce recognized her with its "Woman in Literature" distinction in 2013. In 2017, she was awarded Homer's medal in poetry from the European Union and recipient of the International award of Clément Lanicus in Poland. Sona Van is also the co-founder and editor of, 'Narcis', literary magazine in Armenia, since 2006. Sona Van's latest book, Libretto for the Desert, dedicated to the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, has been acclaimed as one of the most significant modern works on the subject of this historical atrocity. The book has been acknowledged not only by readers and literary critics alike, but also by authorities dedicated to human rights, including U.S. Senator, Adam Schiff, writer, historian, academic, and human rights activist, Raul Ahuron, and Turkish writer, publisher, and political activist, Ragip Zarakolu, who, despite severe harassment, published this book's Turkish translation in Turkey in 2016. His publishing house has been subject to Turkey's regressive Article 301 laws that broadly ban publishing of materials that insult the Turkish Republic. It was forcefully shut down, with many of the books in its facilities having been confiscated. Translations in German, Chinese and French languages were published in 2018.

Sona Van's work beckons dialogue. As such, she is considered to be the most widely discussed contemporary Armenian author by literary critics in Armenia and abroad. Sona Van lives in US with her family since 1978.

I am the Eternal Spider

I am the eternal
eight-legged spider

my web stretches between the window
and TV screen
ad infinitum
between the hollow time
of real and virtual deaths

I can see everything from my center—
A bud appeared on a branch
a pop star sang a familiar song
on TV
a woman gave birth to a son again
a soldier exploded
before the bud could fully open

you first see the light
then you hear the sound
(the laws of nature never change
unlike the laws of conscience)
the light
the sound
the dust
the shoes

a mother screams and falls down
the soil is an underground museum
here is a soldier four centuries after death
and here—only four hours after

everything repeats identically. . . which means
something must be wrong

I am the eternal mourner
in my four black veils

my grandfather was killed by a Turk
my father was killed by a German
my son was killed by an Azeri
and yesterday my daughter gave birth to a son

all killed
all killed
all killed

history repeats itself identically
it's time to elect a new Barabbas

I am the four-part choir
of an eternal jeremiad

I am the velvety mezzo-soprano of a virgin
I am the lyrical tenor of a new bride
I am the restrained baritone of a widowed woman
I am the gruff bass of my cataracted grandmother

I am the eternal eight-thighed nothingness

my grandmother knelt and gave birth to a son
my mother knelt and gave birth to a son
I knelt and gave birth to a son
my daughter knelt and gave birth to a son

our sons crawl
stand up
and fall dead

the oceans need the drowned

I am the eternal dancer
of time
the same cabaret quartet
the same eight-thighed chain of muscles
and the same dance of death
beneath the flashing lights of guns

my grandmother bends her left knee and looks right
my mother bends her left knee and looks right
I bend my left knee and look right
my daughter bends her left knee and looks right
(how I hate these plagiarized knees)

I am the goddess of war
in a metal-hued
blood-red
camouflage skirt
with bombs instead of breasts

time touches my nipples
and falls down

I will always be around . . . that's not the question
I just need four moods of sadness
and it's summer here all year round

**—By Sona Van. From A Libretto for the Desert
Translated to Kiswahili by Aloys Tumbo Angwenyi & Edger
Maina**

Bwocha Nyagemi Bwocha



KENYA

Bwocha Nyagemi Bwocha was born in Bokurati, Nyamira County, Kenya. A graduate from Kenyatta University in both B.Ed. and MA, Bwocha exudes profound passion for poetry. He has taught both at Secondary and University levels in Kenya and Tanzania. Bwocha studied the poetry of Kenya's most prolific poet, Jared Angira, for his MA thesis which he later published as *Semantic Absurdities and Social Vision in Jared Angira's Poetry* (2010). Bwocha has also written short fiction under the title *The Inevitable Burden & Other Stories* (2013). He later studied the plays of Henrik Ibsen and John Ruganda for his Ph.D. from Kenyatta University. Bwocha has written two poetry anthologies *CYNICS & SKEPTICS* (2016) and *THE HARD TREK* (2017). As a teacher of literature, Bwocha frequently uses poetry for didactic purposes, and for literary criticism publications, besides entertaining his students. Bwocha is set to publish a poetry anthology and two plays in the not too distant future. Bwocha is currently a faculty at Kisii University.



IT'LL ALWAYS BE

Wherever you seem to fall
While wondering who to call
In search of warmth and support, I'm always there
And if all should come to naught, don't you hold any tear
Since happiness and grief are here, don't you mind somehow
Someday you gain someday you lose, never let hope to go.

Being unmindful of taking the top prize today
Will help you toil slowly up the hill
It ain't for eternity that I'll be away
When my contest is through, return I will.

Search within for a little while, you'll just feel me
For my love for you you'll see, it'll always be.

- By Bwocha Nyagemi Bwocha





Harrison Omambia Anyango



KENYA

The Present Nights

These nights are tedious and mind- numbing
 They differ from the one's of childhood
 How we slept like logs, dreaming and sobbing
 Telling stories, teasing one another with riddles
 Now this night, with its texture of grey colour
 Nights of glut insomnia and nimble mind
 Appeased in the void of gloom and mosquito bites
 Discarded from an iota of a sleep or kind
 I prompted myself to leave their nights
 Shutter the ennui affiliation of me and insomnia
 Walk a tightrope, out of doors like late Knights
 Diligently watching over the Queens of Britannia

The above prompt sounded less dopey
 Now that's when my mind goes averse
 Cause Unknown folks drowse and dream soppy
 When my present nights--sleepward--are adverse.



THE MONSTER

A burning frame
You spread your wings
Like a million ravens
Ravaging and screwing
All that you come across
Spreading fast to dim the horizon.

You move steadily on to the calm
Waters by the sea side,
Eating up the small fish.
You so merciless
In the sight of gloomy souls,
Inflicting affliction.

Our Hope, now putrid
You eat in silence and in Shouting
You mock.
By the faces of tired masses,
You walk shamelessly with teasing.
As said, ' better while we waited.'

Owe unto you
Enemy of our dreams, and visions
My weary spirit takes heart.
The curse of our fathers roams
A great dragon has invaded
And now awaits to strike.

- By Karinga Wa Muchoki, University of Nairobi



LEWIS
WAMWANDA

Tax Collectors

Ding dong, goes the bell
The door opens wide
They Rush in and out
Like busy bees on errands

They flood the gates
With big round bellies
Like big ripe pumpkins
Collecting notes and cents

They stink of filth
Flies for followers
Buzzing hymns of hunger
To devour the cents collected

Tax collectors,
Collecting taxes from husbands
And sometimes leave change
Seen nine months later

Ding Dong, goes the bell
They flood in the open bars
Carrying empty hungry bellies
Later filled with taxed booze

-By Lewis Wamwanda

Silent Noises

Behind her joy and happiness
Under her smiling face
Hidden in the back of her soul
Black, void and emptiness
She fights her silent noises
The noises that haunt
At midnight when the night is silent
When the spirits are sound asleep
When the waters are cold and still
She's up to listen to the noises from unseen faces
She sits still, in the darkness
Looks dumb and deaf
Stares at space
Gazes, lost in time
But the silent noises torture her mind
The noises sound creepy
Hard to tell what message they have
She cries to the moon and wishes for death
Counts the stars hoping they'd help
Making wishes to the fireflies and hopes death will strike
before dawn
The noises are unheard but they scream in her head
She is dying, silently
She is ashamed to call for help
Afraid to silence the silent noises
She cries, depressed and sad
She, a broken vessel, cries

She's fading
Her spirit is gone
The noises summoned her
Living under depression
She's ready to leave
Her second home awaits
Tired of faking smiles
She's tormented...
By the Silent noises

-By Lewis Wamwanda

She Shouldn't Do this to Me

I hate writing poetry,
If only my teacher knew,
She shouldn't do this to me.

It's even worse than geometry,
It's terrible thing to do,
I hate writing poetry!

It's very plain to see,
I tell you it's true,
She shouldn't do this to me.

This is my final plea,
I can't write this for you,
I hate writing poetry!

I can't write a poem like Persephone,
That would be hard to do,
She shouldn't do this to me.

I'd rather watch TV,
Or try something new,
I hate writing poetry,
She shouldn't do this to me.

-By Famba Evans Allan

This I Know.

For sure this I know
No matter how long I lie low
Thoughts and words will never cease
Forming in my mind with ease
Generating a line or two
Ideas and fantasies too
Which finally will form
A poem like a storm.

For sure this I know
No matter how long I lie low
My native land and language will never cease
Haunting my soul with ease
Generating a sudden longing
To return and watch life going
By the springs of cold water
To return and let out sighs
To the tune of village dancers
To return and lie sweetly
My mind soaring into dark oblivion

- By John Kamau Njoroge

She Died

The lonely servant of pain and anger
Whose presence was seen by the silence inside
She died
The one who was given names
Simply because she did not know herself
She died
That girl who spent days mourning over broken dreams
The one who wanted to stay in her past
That thin girl who was so quiet every now and then
She died
The one with a beautiful small face
And a river-filled heart
The one who was afraid of life coz she couldn't fit in
The one who never wanted herself spotted in public
places
She died
That girl died a very lonely death Just as she had lived it
She died with tears still flowing in her heart
Pain still coiled inside her
She died
She died not knowing that she is dead
She still walks around unseen
Not knowing that she can't be seen anymore
A spirit in the land of the living
She died

-By Dorothy Nyandega, Sorrows in love ©DorohBuccy

*That girl who spent
days mourning over
broken dreams
The one who wanted to
stay in her past
That thin girl who was
so quiet every now and
then
She Died*



Alovi Celestine Liyeya

University of Nairobi

*“Elders! She said she
was her sister!
She refused to bear me a son,
I took in a second wife,
the one I wanted..”*

Peace or No Rest

May he rest in peace, may he rest in peace,
But how will he when the doctor just left him?
The doctor told him his gloves irritated him,
So he left to see if the new ones from Spain arrived,
As the gloves from Spain were brought in, his pain dimmed his
light,
How will he know peace as he rests?

May he rest in peace, may he rest in peace,
But how will he when the nurses told him it was their lunch
hour?
They called him a dog for vomiting and ruining their appetite,
They called him a pig for tripping and landing in the very vomit,
He passed out and passed on with their faces still in his eyes,
How will he know peace as he rests?

May he rest in peace, may he rest in peace,
Is he even resting or maybe still feeling that pain that took him,
That pain that no one did anything about,
Is he even resting or maybe still hearing their cold voices,
He might still be battling their mean faces,
How will he know peace as he rests?

May he rest in peace, may he rest in peace,
Hoping he finds peace by remembering my tears,
My tears of love as I shut his eyes for him to rest for good,
Hoping he finds peace by remembering the morgue attendant,
Who sang him songs in the evening, snored rhythmically in the
night and washed him this morning,
Hope he remembers the peace in peaceful voices and still see
the peaceful faces, as he rests.

- By Alovi Celestine Liyeya

She Said She was Her Sister

Elders! She said she was her sister!
Besides, I've got nothing to offer for any sacrifice,
Elders, all my goats are coughing with flu,
I knew I would take her for my second wife,
Unlike her, she had no dry eyes, no dry words, no dry body.

Elders! She said she was her sister!
With no other home but her sister's,
She said I could take another wife but her,
I wondered, why not her? I liked her for a second wife,
I am not to blame but my sick wife.

Elders! She said she was her sister!
She refused to bear me a son,
I took in a second wife, the one I wanted,
I have no chicken for the sacrifice,
We ate the last one in celebration for the son I now await.

Elders! She said she was her sister!
I am not to blame but my sick wife,
She let me see her otherwise until now that she declares a
taboo,
If anyone is to be before this council that should be my sick
wife,
She says the child can't be born, I say it will be born!
Elders! We are here because she said she was her sister!

- By Alovi Celestine Liyeya, University of Nairobi

A DAY ON CAMPUS

Pin-drop tranquil in a once virgin campus
Suddenly eroded by exultations of
'Comrades' power,
One, two or more genteel ladies
And another group of gentle men
Standing angrily at the rear end
Of the campus gate
Ferocious, vexed, apoplectic and enraged
Ready to die ahead of their death
Like a lion seeking for a prey
After 40 years of no bite
Billboards falling, dangling freely on air
This is too much to be a reality, I thought
Window panes smashed, fractured
Tyres rolling ready to consume their grievances
Offices set a blaze
Thick irritated smoke dashing
Tormenting the air, raping the ozone layer
From her romantic slumber
Soon a siren is heard
We all know what's forthcoming

Those beasts, merciless, brawny
Uniformed, dauntless daredevils
Who rejoice watching their mothers' nude?
And still let their phallus stand
Who will soon set faulty taps on our cheeks!
After cocking they say
That the bullet was astray!
But now where does it stay?
It has gone past the forehead
Past the skull
It has gone too deep to the white tissue
And our own is now loud in silence
Has given up to the ghost
In a varsity she once called her host.
Licking the ancestral dust
Just a day to the end of the 4 years
Just a day to her sparkling in
Her academic regalia
Just what will we tell her mother?

-By Elly Omullo

Dear Mother

When I left you wept
I'm told, for days, you little slept
And many nights by, have crept
Dear mother, since I left.

My soul itches
As I recall your tender smile, though the wind I chase.
They say, a wild goose chase, oh, what a phase
Dear mother, since I left for this race!

Often how I pray
For this darkness to fade, this day!
But seemingly nay
I've got to say every day since I left that way.

Unceremonious they say with lots of laughter,
Did you even think I could design a new chapter?
Oh no...I couldn't tell what could be thereafter!
Hence the label as they say, dear mother.

Since I left your castle for the 'goose chase',
A lot of water has passed under the bridge, through grace,
And the way now I can trace
For your supplication has silently guided me through the
race.

-By Josephat Ndege Mauti

*This is too much
to be areality,
I thought
Window panes smashed,
fractured Tyres rolling
ready to consume
their grievances
Offices set a blaze*

Entangled Hearts

We engraved our names
On the trunk of our
Favourite eucalyptus
Remember love
We went there monthly to redraw the curves

We drew our hearts
On the pine and cedar trees
And as the two trees grew
We filled it with images of our
Entangled hearts

We played hide and seek
Around the mahogany trees
I remember I won every time
--Or did you let me win?

We used Douglas fir and oak to build
A home for our love
Of course we needed something strong
To hold the atriums and ventricles together

Our hearts we
Furnished with pieces of
Eastern white pine and yew
And a little pieces of western red cedar

I remember baby
The stairs to our hearts were made
By Parana pine
And our hearts were rich with love
Like teak and walnuts

So our love became as elegant
As the maples
Strong like the Australian Buloke
Or should we say Schinopsis brasiliensis
Beautiful as the cherries
And close to flawless like the poplars

- By Margaret Wairimu Waweru

*We played hide
and seek Around
the mahogany trees
I remember I won
every time*

The Village Girl

How weird it sounds to many of you
For being a village girl from Gusii land
Things being new to the Village Girl
How amazing it is or rather funny

Call me the Village Girl
For I know you wish to hear stories of my village
Language barrier being part of this but...
Still make sure I shine and make it lit

Didn't have the chance to sit
Watch Television -- Cartoon Networks
For I knew they were all ghosts
How foolish I was -- yeah -- I the village girl

How proud to be a village 'Chiquita'
How fun it is to go to the river to fetch water
Many tiring kilometers down the hill
Eating wild fruits along -- yeah -- I the Village girl

How brightened my face become
When in contact with motors, digital materials
They say "Ushamba ni gharama", well I never mind
I am used standing to observe -- yeah -- I the village girl

Language skills has never been my hindrance
At least I try one or two words
"Ona huyu anaangusha" -- a cliché to me
I won't fake it so as to fit in -- yeah -- I the village girl

The city is a new world to me
Visiting relatives has been on
my mind
For firewood is the only souvenir I know
Call me silly once more -- yeah -- I the village girl

How I love dancing to the tune
Of Mshamba's song "Egentinginye Ekeng'aini"
Kerigia oboundi kiagache embura egotwa gesoe
mwaye"
Join me let's dance to this.

- By Jael Kemuma Migiro

Home, a PERTURBED PANDEMONIUM

Home,
I see them,
Young and aged,
Thinning out, angular and clumsy.
Their ribs weak of yawns;
Yawns of self-loathe.
Eyes rolling in their captive dry sockets,
A pine for a sacred vengeance,
Succumbed to a bitter pangs of betrayal.

- By Constany Oteki Mose

*"Success is like lust,
she's good to the touch.
She's good for the moment
but she's never enough"*

Where shall I find

Where in the heart of men
Lies the solid solitude
Where the tide is in the rise
Mimicking the rising sun
Where in the coolest pool of the night
Misty mallows, labyrinth of bone marrow
In the hideous hiding is it his
Where, oh where...
Where in the brightest bright light
Twirls of a rainy rainbow did it pierce a hole
Like an arrow from a bow it goes
Where does it lie or is it a lie?
That solitude exists, do man resist and insist that chaos
persist?
Where did you go
Where shall I find what will bind catastrophe
And blind unrest resting on the hearts of men
Where shall I find solitude
In the serene serenity uniting in the unity
Of every cool evening in the flower garden?
The palm trees or vine yards, perhaps the orchard.
Where shall I find solitude?
Was it left in Eden?

-By Richard Onkendi

*Light
it again*

So now I am flirting with failure
One who gives me heartache
Deepest agony
She makes me grind my teeth

I once had a date with success
I know how much we loved each other
We had a kid, "Victory"

As well tread our joyous moments
We had lunch deliriously
Spontaneously and specially

Woe betide me
For I lost my wife and my child

Now am back to square one
This very place I started and a tunnel more
People I had helped talked about me
Behind closed doors and close their doors behind me

But am stuck with failure
In this dark tunnel...
And water beneath my shoes
Which makes my booths heavy
Jay-z quoted
"Success is like lust, she's good to the touch,
She's good for the moment but she's never enough"
And now I know it's true
For here I am wallowing in these seemingly
Unending dark tunnel of failure

But as dark as it seems
I'll light it up
For I never forget two things
My lighter and a candle
Prepare for the worst
Pray for the best

They are committing suicide
For a situation lighter than mine
They lost all hopes
For a situation heavier than my booth straps

Let's all light it up
The broken candle we have left
Let's light it up
For my tunnel is illuminated
Once more...

- By Richard Onkendi

PAST FESTIVAL PHOTOS



Director Christopher Okemwa and
Amily Omanakuttan (India)





KPF 2018 - Poetry reading
at Riara University





KPF 2018 - Poets at Nebo Hotel



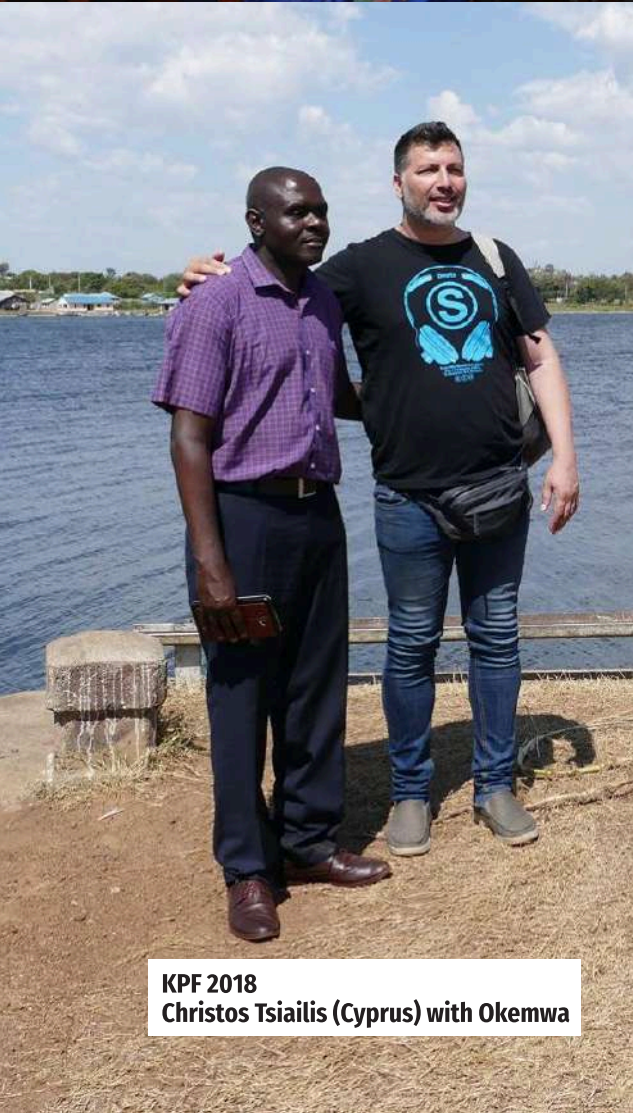
KPF 2018- Diti Ronen (Israel) reading her poetry



KPF 2018- Guest Poets from Europe



KPF 2018-A Visit to Lake Victoria



KPF 2018
Christos Tsailis (Cyprus) with Okemwa



KPF 2018-Ihalainen (Finland)



KPF 2018-European Guest Poets



KPF 2018-Inger Mari Aikio (Finland)
Richard Maisiba (Kenya)



KPF 2018-Inger Mari Aikio (Finland)



KPF 2018-Ken Walibora



KPF 2018-Lilian Gisesa, Molly Joseph, Christopher Okemwa & Xavier Gregory (India)



KPF 2018-Molly Joseph(india)



KPF 2018-Kuria Dancers in Migori



KPF 2018-Opening Ceremony



KPF 2018-Participating Poets



KPF 2018-Poet Nese Yasin (Cyprus)



KPF 2018 - Prof. John Akama, Vice-Chancellor, Kisii University



KPF 2019-Dr. Bwocha Nyagemi Bwocha





KPF 2018-Poetry reading



KPF 2018-Spoken Word Artists at Riara University



KPF 2018-Poets in groups



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