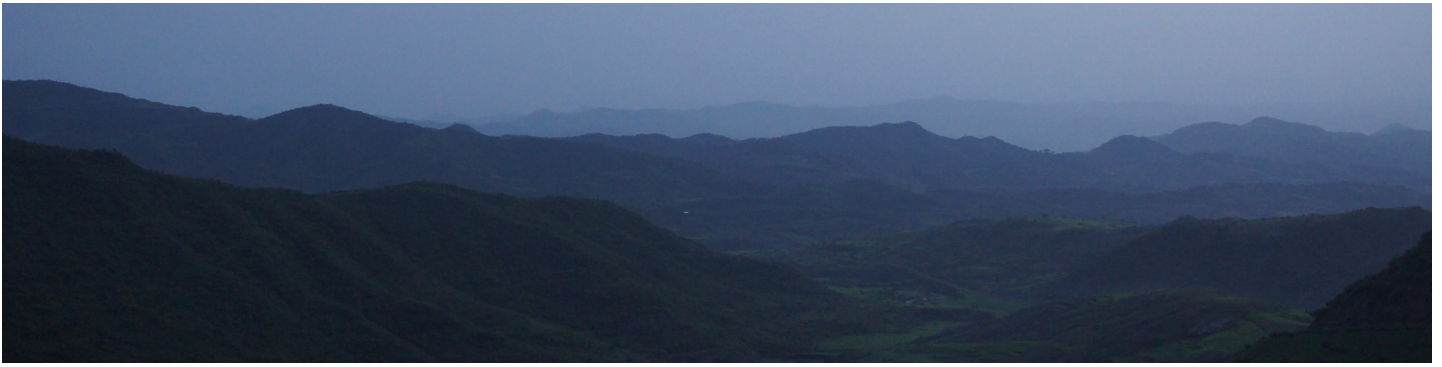




Lockdown writing from the African continent

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR



This is a collection of texts written during the corona lockdown in the first half of this strange, tumultuous year, 2020. Some of them are *about* the corona lockdown and almost all of them were written somewhere in Africa: there are texts from South Sudan, Ethiopia-Oromia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria.

I am writing this in Stockholm, Sweden, where I live. When the lockdown happened here, concerned friends from around Africa got in touch to ask how we were doing up here. It seemed that the world had been turned upside down, and that people in the West were struggling to understand what was happening and the western elite were desperate to secure their power and money. How was I doing in all of this, my worried friends asked me – worried for my sake, but also perhaps a little fascinated by the fact that the shoe was now on the other foot.

Then African leaders started to order their citizens to stop what they were doing. My friends saw themselves out of opportunities to make a living. They stayed in their homes hoping things would blow over sooner rather than later. I talked to writers who had gone home to their families in the village before the lockdown and got stuck there. More than one said they found it difficult to continue working on their current projects.

But the world does not stop turning. A lot of things has happened since the lockdown, many of them bad things. Like the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA. I could see online that people got back into it, posting texts (poems etc) about what is going on as updates on social media.

And so the idea for this anthology was born: I thought it would be interesting to collect texts written during the lockdown and make them available to people in different parts of Africa and the world. Literature has a real role to

play in turbulent times like these, I think. It ceases to be a pastime or something you can use to seem cultured and educated. Instead it becomes a way to record history as it happens and to negotiate the relation between the past, present and future.

The plan now is this: the digital version you are currently reading is freely available online to everyone, everywhere. Next thing that will happen is that I will try to scrape together a little money and print one edition of the collection that will be available in shops and on the street in Nairobi and one that will be available in Stockholm.

What happens after this I don't know (this seems to me to be one of the most frequently used sentences nowadays). But if it works – if people seem to be interested in reading collected works like these in this form – I will probably publish more editions together with some people who have become involved with this project in the last couple of weeks.

I have enjoyed getting in touch with old friends and new and doing the layout. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the contributors for their generosity, Joanna Woods of Africa in Words, Riaan Oppelt, Godfrey Ikahu and others for spreading the word about the project throughout Africa, Ray Mwihi and Steve Maneno in Nairobi and Larry Farber in Stockholm for agreeing to help with distribution and legwork, Coral for listening to my excited babbling throughout this process, my colleague Ashleigh Harris for supporting the project, Mike Frangos for helping with editing, Mark Frygell for contributing illustrations, Jim Barrett for editorial input and the good Mr. Maneno again for submitting photos from the streets of Nairobi during the lockdown. And also, of course, thank you for reading these texts.

Nicklas Hällén
Stockholm, June 2020
notesfromthelockdown@mail.com

My poor mother

My poor mom, the one and the only I love,
These days, you are in my thoughts and I can't sleep or rest,
Preoccupied with worry and the impending fate
Thinking about the effects the pandemic might unleash on you,
Asking myself so many questions and wondering how you might do
Filling in the blanks based on observation and the facts,
I worry how you might respond, if the pandemic conquers your heart,
you may not have the power to defend yourself, your self and your home,
Your adult children with potential and capability have left
for safety or for greed to a land far away,
Your doctors are not there to treat you,
As they too have left abroad and seem not to care for you.

How will you bear with the loss you will face?
What are you doing to protect your children during this critical period?
What are you doing dear mom?
My only beloved and poor mom,
Let me hear your pain and listen to your story before one of us sleeps for eternity,
As we see now, even the powerful rich countries could not protect their citizens,
It seems the more they are civilized, the more loss they suffer,
They produced powerful modern computerized weapons to destroy human lives,
Yet, they fail to produce the vital vaccines needed during this critical time,
They satisfied so many human desires, making life seem limitless,
They went to the Moon and are going to Mars,
with hopes of one day moving and living there.
However, they fail to prevent people dying from COVID-19.
That is why I worry about your well-being and my siblings.

So my poor mother, let me know how ready you are for your losses.
You know better how your leaders are corrupt and conspire against the masses,
For their personal interests and their ego.
They are barely working together to find a solution to deal with the problems at hand.

How can you bear the loss of your poor children
When your children don't care about each other,
When they are careless while their siblings die
Do you think they can change their attitude and protect each other?
Do you think they can be generous and learn to survive together?

My poor mother, you don't have the capacity and the knowledge to protect your children,
Their lifestyle will easily affect them and expose them more,
They don't have materials they can use to protect themselves.
You've already seen how this pandemic is killing so many people around the world,
And never let rich and developed countries fight back.

So my poor mom, how are you going to fight for your children to survive?
Do you have any idea what advice you would give your children?
Have you seen hope or dreams of good things come true for your children tomorrow?
Mama Africa, may the almighty #Waaqayyoo_God bless your children and protect them.
I'm so desperately worried and can't sleep or rest
when I imagine your children will be infected.

My only beloved mom, may the spirit of our ancestors protect you and your children,
May the Almighty not show me the death of my brothers and sisters and yours.
I pray that God will save our world from this kind of distraction and death,
I wish you a long and healthy life and let your innocence protect you from this evil.

by Chala Hailu Abate
Oromia-Ethiopia/Sweden

We shall wait

By Tuntufye
Simwimba

Malawi

See, I am at the Story Club Café and Chris is worried about his dog bedding ugly boys. You know Chris, yes? Chris Msosa. Regular-height Chris. Lean Chris. Chris with a fondness for poetry, ascot caps and round golden rimmed spectacles. I am yet to find out if the specs are prescriptive or cosmetic. But yes, that Chris. If you have been at the Story Club Café, you probably know Chris.

So, Chris is worried to shit. With the heat period thickening, fifteen suitors are courting his dog, pouring in everyday - short dogs, tailless dogs, stray dogs, dogs with ear-tags that look like earrings, dogs that have survived awful accidents and have a limp in their walk to show for it as evidence of their hustle, ragamuffin dogs. Yes, he mentioned the dogs to be fifteen. He had the tenacity to count. It's an issue that makes him explode with diarrhea at night, why shouldn't he count? He says his dog picks the ragamuffins. Don't they all pick the shabby ones, these beautiful ladies?

I envy the dogs. They will not suffer the impending lockdown. They will continue to make love and annoy the hell out of Chris. I will suffer.

I have just moved out from home with the same recklessness I upset my life. I do not have a job. I had a thin savings. The cost of moving has eaten most of it off. There is some meat in the fridge but it is not enough to pull through 21-days. The tomatoes have started rotting away. The smallest Irish potatoes have remained in the kitchen basket. They are painful to peel. I have abandoned them - the maid will pick them when she comes on Monday. She comes three days a week to do the dishes and pick up beer bottles scattered around the house when the boys drop in.

She was excited when I agreed to her proposed salary two weeks ago. It is small, way beneath the nation's minimum pay and the lawyer in me keeps advocating on her behalf that I am breaking a couple of labour laws. I silence him by giving her whatever I can give away when she comes to work. It calms me. This time she will pick the Irish potatoes so that I calm my spirits.

The onions too need replenishing. And, there is the rice and cooking oil and rentals and electricity and the salary for the maid. My savings will not survive, that is why I am here, at the Café, to blow off some steam.

We meet here as writers to discuss our new stories, to exchange books and to hear Chris complain about his dog's choice of men. Soon, this luxury will also be robbed from us. The fare has already doubled.


There is a demonstration in Mzuzu - 400 Kilometres away. The demonstrators are saying it is better to die of Covid-19 than die of hunger. I hope the demonstration gets here so that I can join. The lockdown cannot be an appropriate response. Not in the third poorest country in the world without a social protection system in place. There is a resignation that the government is handling the matter that infuriates me.

Government officials seem to say, the poison that spoilt Wuhan is hers. It might have spilled over like heated milk. Its footprints might have scatter across the globe. And its antenna might have even perforated the dust of Kaliyeka. But that's not our poison. We shall hide in our homes and wait for Wuhan to write a love letter to the world that a vaccine has matured from its very backyard.

Ours is a duty to wait. And to congratulate our tailors for making cheap masks. And to praise our universities for mixing alcohol with glycerin and litter the streets with hand sanitizer. But, you, Wuhan, this is your problems to solve. Because, here, we have no microscopes to see your virus. We will cough like we cough every day. We will die like we die of Malaria. But, we will not pretend, this is not our problem to solve. This is yours, and America's, and Britain's, and CDC's, and WHO's. We will not pretend because you did not pretend either that we were an equal in global affairs. We were a tiny baby to be tricked. To be stolen from. To be raped and mocked.

To be kept poor, under-developed. You Wuhan, the West, find the vaccine. We shall wait. □





Covid-19 came to change the world

by Malakia Haimbangu
Outapi, Namibia.

Beauty and ugliness are now behind the mask
The link between general public is torn apart
No hugs, neither show of affection is allowed
No kiss on the cheek, neither on the back of hand
The world has transformed, the link is broken

Hands are washed, limbs frequently sanitized
Buckets at the door as thermometers are blazing
Stickers cautioning all to stand a footstep apart
No get-togethers to laugh and no parties to feast
The world has transformed, the link is broken

Restaurants are with no cooks, bars are empty
Go drink and eat at home, you are told per diem
You are told even they know you are homeless
What can you do? Otherwise you get detained
The world has transformed, the link is broken

It is clear, the world has finally altered its course
Brusquely, the world's future is no longer certain
What must be done? COVID-19 is on the march
Forcing the world in the direction never known
The world has changed, the link is broken

Covid-19 is here

by Victoria Hasheela-Mufeti,
Windhoek, Namibia.

And then the unexpected happened
All of a sudden we are confined
If you happen to have a need
You must travel with a permit

The shelves are now empty
Sanitizers all gone away
To ensure dirt is out of the way,
We must find another way

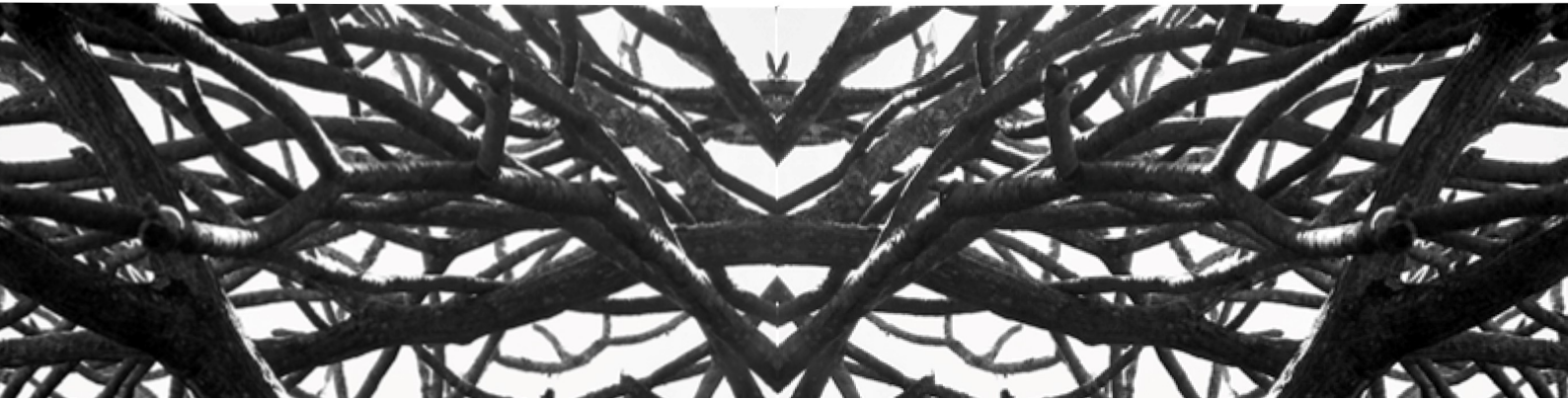
The buildings are neglected
The internet got us connected
Work must be completed
Data is almost depleted

Covid-19 is really here
You would think the end is near
Our own echos is all what we hear
The neighbourhood is all in fear

The only thing we can do
Is to adhere to the rules
This may be the only law out of two
The other is to send prayers to Him who,
Does what we ask Him to do.

Botswana's metalheads and the Corona lockdown: fashion statements, fatherhood and homemade beer.

by Tshomarelo Mosaka, Rakops, Botswana.



Botswana is just like all countries affected by the Corona virus pandemic. Our Ministry of Health and Wellness has put measures in place against the spread of corona and one of those is an order to cover the mouth and nose with a face mask. This message was received with full force the metal way by Botswana's heavy metal fans, who excitedly warmly welcomed the idea by putting on their horrific Iron Maiden themed and Wrong Turn masks. So far, Botswana is among the least affected countries in Africa as their Government has put in place strict, necessary and relevant measures that are to be followed in order to fight the Covid19 virus.

The anger, sadness, confusion and hopelessness emotions cause by the corona virus will obviously make us forget the important facts about life - that each and every natural or artificial disaster on earth has advantages and disadvantages. Such situations bring about negative and positive changes. Diseases and war are very sad things and we cannot be happy about them, but in such difficult times people need to be strong, courageous, hopeful and supportive and need to smile and laugh, for these are positive remedies for confusion, depression and anger.

The Corona virus pandemic has brought changes to the normal everyday life for people in Botswana. Gatherings of more than 10 people and 50 in activities such as weddings, funerals, church services etc. were prohibited and therefore wedding costs have reduced a lot, and that's one positive change. People have developed survival skills and positive health lifestyles such as doing household chores, exercising, designing things, something we never thought would happen. We have seen the lazy becoming active hard workers and the food stuff consumption rate increased. We have

seen some men whom we knew spent their time out of their home drinking friends giving their families attention now. Some have begun getting to know more about their partners and children, discovering that their kids are left-handed and can speak English.

The closing down all bottle stores has meant that no one has been able to drink alcohol. We never knew we had people in our country who possess alcohol brewing skills. The first two weeks of our lockdown was not too bad, but then alcoholics started making booze mixing red apples with water, yeast and rooibos tea. A week or so later the beer is ready for drinking, and the mix is brutal. For some of us metalheads, it was really difficult the first few weeks for get used to staying with our partners for such a long time, and this led to some tensions and later to conflicts as secrets were revealed due to the long time spent together assessing each other. As some of the most enthusiastic alcohol and tobacco consumers, the metal community was heavily affected by the lockdown, but we highly welcomed the idea of homemade brew. The brew is not legal though and if found one will be arrested and charged.

I personally think the lockdown is a great idea to prevent and stop the spread of disease and it makes me smile that all those excuses for not having babies will no longer be valid. There is plenty of time to make babies for those who failed due to busy schedules. If one fails to make a baby during this lockdown, I am sure there will never get a better chance. And people are back to enjoying coffee, tea and all home cooked meals. Metalheads are playing their old records all day long. As for my band, Overthrust, the battle is always on: full set dangerous rehearsals and new stuff is being made.□



From *Rural Snob*,
by S'nothile Gumede
Durban, South Africa.

Solitude

In lawn seats

Shag

I Bruce my own skin

How come I cannot close ears to the echoes of my own voice?

From scent to accent,
They Judge us

Induce,
Once upon a time
I ceased.

Invariably loath
Suspended in a penitentiary
Every human touch causes a relapse
And so, I fold myself
Yearning to vanish
Yet leaving traces

I HOPE ONE DAY I WILL BE FOUND

Early twenties,
Anamnesis of a needle infiltrating the geriatric body of a diabetic

Dear child,
Love hurts and heals

I only have two matchsticks in my pockets

I cannot risk

As I barge in the classroom,
My knees tremor
(giggles)

There's no humanity for an African in China

by Carolyn M. Acen (Afroetry)
Kampala, Uganda

Leprosy charred feet,
And a plague marinated coat
Lurches across the street in
Yesterday's rot.
That's how they look at me.
With disgust foaming at the
Corner of their lips, they
Stare at me like I did
Something wrong.
5 Seats empty.
The bus is full.
There's no space for this black curse.
There's no humanity for my tinted
Shade at the western coast of this Pacific.

They treat me as an apparition.
Just another alien.
They search me like a common thief
When our paths collide like
two helicopters.
Then they draw back their masks,
and take the other route amidst
Jumbled mandarin words.

The stench of Covid-19 still lingers
Like a ghost.
The old Wuhan lover refused to leave the bed.
The fear conjures hate.
Segregation breeds like mosquitoes.
Poisonous oblong shaped
Pupils sting my midnight skin.
Verbally mutilate me, and
My kin with a quiet sigh.
Trashed.
Discarded.
The long queue of suspicion is an
Unwanted communion.
This blueprint of oppression
Whistles and spits like
An electric kettle.
I am no stranger to these
Racist chants.
My black skin has always hung at
Half mast as a flag of shame.

(cont.)



MLUNGU!

Toll of not being enough

I
Fell
In
. .

ONOMATOPOEIA

Sailing in a storm,
Heavy Easterlies Wobbly,
Relinquishment,

I was just a sailor resting at your shores,
Hoping that your waves will carry me home

They puked tantrums

(cont. Gumedé)

This tasteless communist
Banquet makes me want to
Drown in my spit.
In rooms I can barely breathe in.
Streets that barely know me.
The rent is stalled.
Eviction is another scratched
mixtape in a land, foreign.
Justified.
And applauded.
While our Governments forge
Treaties in our names and
Knit blankets of trade.
They feast like a medieval
Royal party while we languish
On the streets of China.
As an abhorrence.
Unwanted.
Worse than this pandemic.
China wears a mask for
Covid-19, and Africa.
There's no humanity for Africans
in fog filled Racist China.

(cont. Acen)

Covid-19: Our world's challenge

by Solomon Smart S. Bangura
Freetown, Sierra Leone

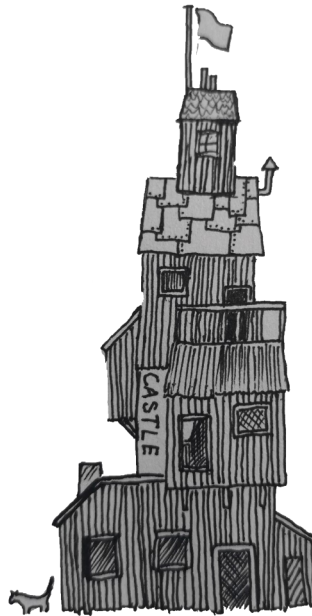
From Across the world, the stories came.
From across the world, the virus came.
Carried by terror...
Its news on the screen frightens like a horror.

To the wealthy, it is a lockdown.
To the needy, it is a lockdown.
Pitiless Corona, everywhere is a lockdown.
Why have you decided to make us all frown?

Share some relief materials with your neighbour (s).
It is a favour, for a lifetime, they will always harbour.
Maintain cleanliness, it is next to Godliness.
It will help contain this illness.

Obey government directives.
Covid 19 is real: Don't say it's primitive...
And that you have resistance... that is native.
Obey the laws of lockdown; so that you won't be knocked down.

It's normal to be more than a little afraid.
Especially with no work and not being paid.
Our world is now locked in a cage.
Don't worry. This sad moments will be in our history page.



The year churches and mosques closed
by Carolyne M. Acen (Afroetry)
Kampala, Uganda

God caught a cold, and the cherubs
Were put under quarantine.
Religion took a public lashing on
The back.
And religious leaders were put out
Of business.
Yes! Let it be known.
Crickets led humanity's requiem mass.
And cockroaches roamed
Abandoned aisles, and
Pulpits like drunks.

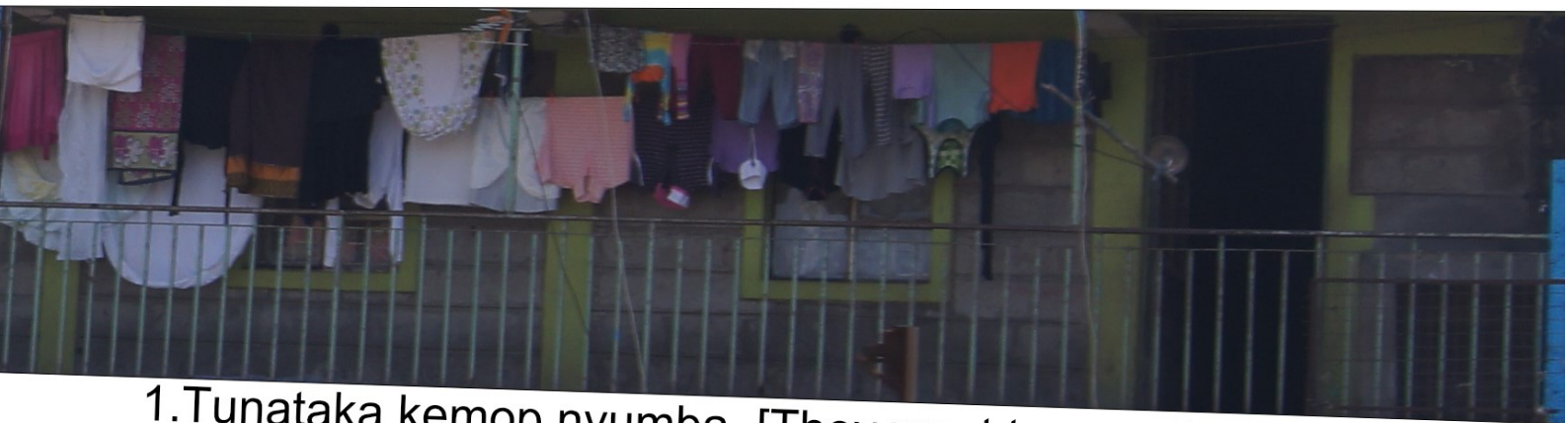
When the mourning dove, and the
Neighbor's cat showed up for
Mass on Sunday.
The church mouse hummed a woeful
Dirge for less, less a penny.
Mosquitoes buzzed inside the
Mosque on Friday.
And Marabou storks peered
Through open windows hoping
To catch a little action.
Our ancestors grinned
Inside the grave.
A murder of crows stood
Out like bouncers at club venom.
A disco ring enshrouded
The old cemetery.
As the presidential address
Took hold, and the curfew
Of ghosts was extended to
21 days.




Corona Horror Scenario. By Prof. Mark Chetambe (Nairobi)



Scary statments when Corona forces you to stay at home:



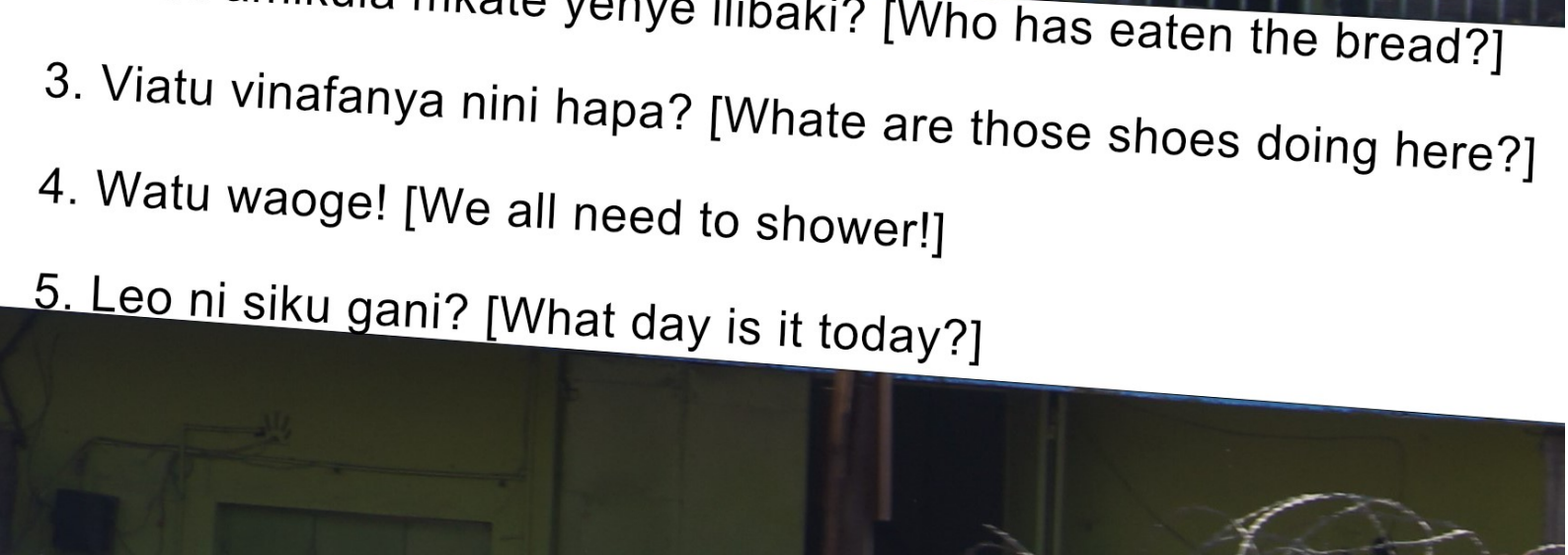
1. Tunataka kemop nyumba. [They want to mop the house]



2. Nani amikula mkate yenye ilibaki? [Who has eaten the bread?]

3. Viatu vinafanya nini hapa? [Whate are those shoes doing here?]

4. Watu waoge! [We all need to shower!]



5. Leo ni siku gani? [What day is it today?]

FAME

by Ozara Collins Adolf, Nigeria.

8:45am, Room 47

Inside a palatial suite off the coast of San Diego. Sun rays reflect through the window, onto the large four-poster bed where two ladies and a man snore. The Persian carpet smells of marijuana. Empty bottles of wine loiter around as ruminants of the merrymaking that occurred in this very room last night.

Knock, knock! Bangs on the door, as the man from the trio drags his tired legs towards the door to see who it is. “Sewa, we’ve got a problem.” Teriake, her manager blurts out, as she dashes past the bicep man at the door in the direction of her boss. “And what is it this time?” the sleepy ebony beauty mutters as she relieves herself of the sheets, revealing a giant rose tattoo on her back. She goes for the maple drawer and doles out wads of cash to her night companions, which could pass as payment for their pleasurable services. They pick up their clothing, and smiling, they exit. “You need to see this...” Teriake continues as she drops an iPad from her fur sweater into the tiny hands of Sewa so she can see clearly for herself.

Adesewa Koffi, popularly known as ‘Sewa,’ is a recording artist and vocalist who have grown considerably in the entertainment scene – a voice to be reckoned with for almost a decade. Recently, she has taken the continent by surprise with a star-studded, ideological and awesome album – ‘Elle dieu de l’afrique’ (She-god of Africa) – which continues to create buzz in the music industry to the extent of metamorphosing into a movement for the African woman. Also, in the past weeks most music commentators and On Air Personalities (OAP) have been divided on the argument that she is long overdue for a Grammy after her song ‘Chante Koko’ got nominated for Best Pop Vocal category in the

upcoming Grammy Awards. Her fame has gone beyond the shores of the continent, as she has toured Amsterdam, Manchester, Lagos, Yaoundé, Marseilles, and several other cities which saw her falling asleep in one part of the world and waking up in another. This is the situation of things for the young lady singer.

“There is never a way of pleasing these people. Anyway, you gonna get your head drowning in the water while you struggle to save your goddamn self...” an infuriated Sewa blasts out, throwing the device on the bed.



The content of the video is all the proof she needs that she is being blackmailed into yet another scandal. While she was busy making waves, controversies continued to trail her. A week ago, the magazines had asked their readers ‘Is this your icon?’ after she smashed cameras belonging to two photojournalists who had gone against her wish, to cover her charity ball in the city of Bamenda. Over the years, this same media has continued to interfere with her private affairs, sexuality, whereabouts and so much more, even

though she wants none of it, and hasn’t bargained for this, as she stated in an interview with *The Indomitables* late last year:

“I have never loved the fame and publicity that comes with being famous. Yes! I wanted the fame, but it was solely for my music and not me. I am not able to go to the market, hang out like other Cameroonians out there. It’s sickening!”

She picks out a Cuban cigar, lights it up and puffs smoke into the air as she rests on her couch, remembering her teenage days in Bamenda. When she was young, wild and free.□

The Unfathomable Pandemic

By Dr. Antony Mukasa.
Chuka, Kenya.

Short Story fiction on Covid-19 state in a Kenyan Village

Wafula peered at the sky in apprehension. The silence in his one room hut sickened him. The heavy gloom that engulfed the home reverberated in every corner. Suddenly, without any warning, tears began to cascade down his cheeks. This shocked him. He had always taken pride in his masculinity after boldly passing through the circumcision rite and had always believed tears represented weakness. He hurried to wipe them and felt relieved that he was alone. It would have been a shame if his age-mates or the girls had found him in this compromised state. The rain pounded his roof mercilessly as if sent to torment him further.

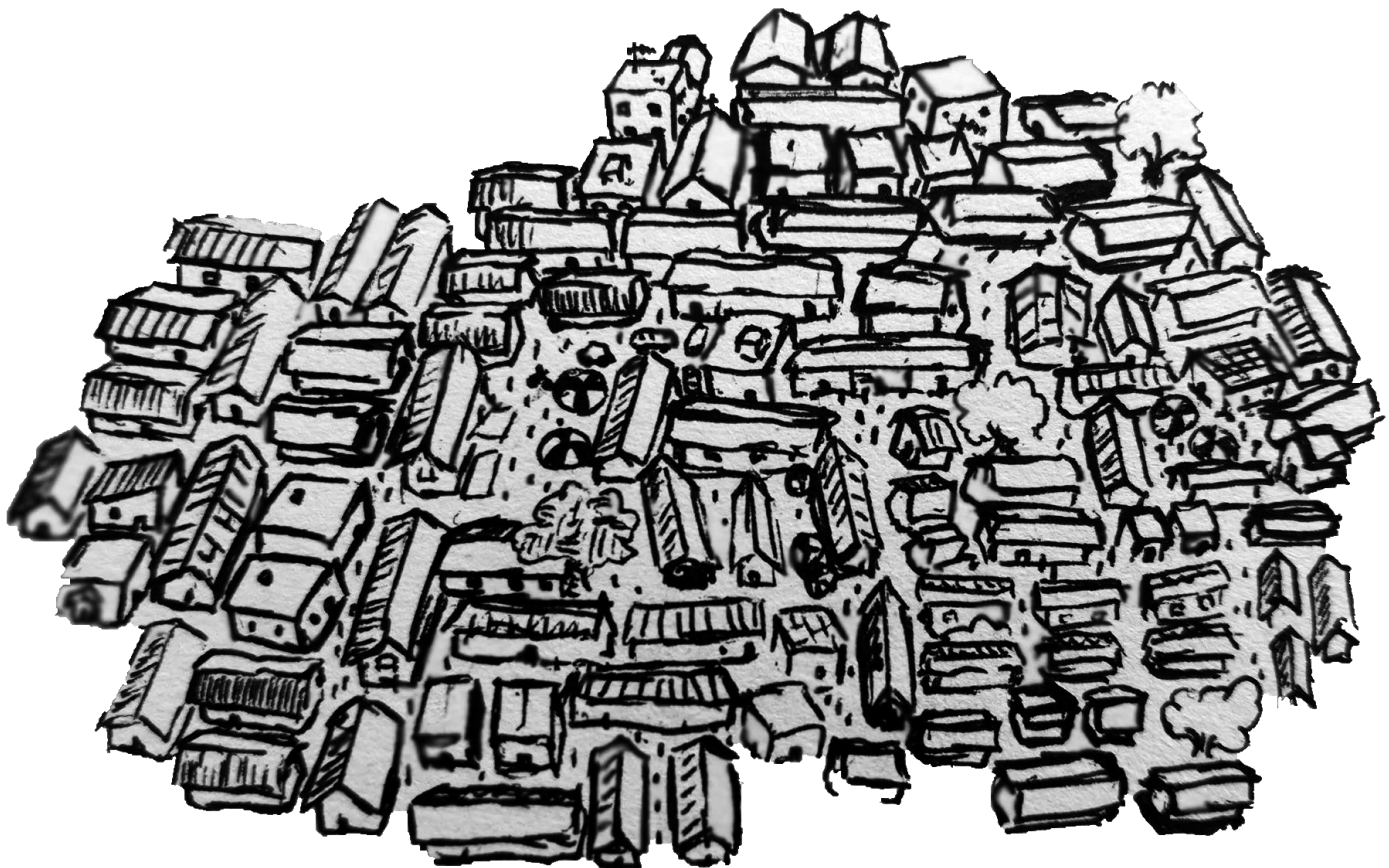
Wafula jerked out of his bed after remembering that he had forgotten to deliver the evening milk to the local dairy. The thought of finding the co-operative closed sent a shiver through his body. His father would be furious as the family depended on the few coins that they got from the milk in the hard times since the

government had declared a partial lockdown during the Corona Virus pandemic. The virus had swept all over the world like a colossus, not sparing the village which had its first causality, an old man who had visited his son in the city. The funeral had been hurried with neighbours and the clan members kept at a distance. The old man's burial had left the village in disbelief. No ceremonies, no mourning and a limited attendance supervised by the chief from a distance. Old men in the village who had witnessed many generations observed that nothing like this had ever happened since the days of yore. It was an abomination sending an elder to the ancestor in such a callous manner. However, the chief with the village headman were there to enforce the directive. Nothing was spared by the spread of the monster virus in the village.

Wafula rushed out of the house with the jerrican of milk. The curfew hours were approaching. Meeting the menacing police officers with their whips was a

nightmare. Villagers who had been lashed recounted the horrors. Grown men wailed as the police executed heavy punishments on the curfew offenders. The thought of meeting the police after the curfew emboldened Wafula who scuttled through the pounding rain.

Just like the whole world, Wafula's life had been brought to a standstill by the new virus that had grounded all activities. The young man's life had been on an upward spiral after securing a scholarship to study in America. Preparations had been in high gear. The whole village was in awe as they prepared to send their son to the land of opportunity. The American dream of prosperity hanged in Wafula's mind as he heard elder after elder reminding him of the need to observe strict discipline in a foreign lands that had been known to swallow anyone that went against the grain. This had been during the last fundraising that had helped the young man get money for the air ticket. (cont.)



(Mukasa cont.) The period was marked with an aura of joy, liveliness and the Ubuntu spirit of togetherness. The atmosphere was filled with a lot of ululating from the women, laughter from the old men and nostalgic narrations by Wafula's father of how far he had come up with the young man. The old man evoked memories of father-son relationships filled with aggression, tension, happiness and triumph. His mother was busy with the crowd of women preparing sumptuous African dishes. In the other corner, men of age sipped the traditional liquor called "busaa" from a single pot with their straws. Wafula remembered these moments with nostalgia.

In contrast, the current situation became the epitome of loneliness, solitude, suspicion and fear immediately the president made a decree of a dusk to dawn curfew after the country experienced the first case of Covid-19 or coronavirus. Suddenly, the village became a ghost town with the normal village gatherings at market points suddenly disappearing. The forums provided lively debate on happening in and outside the village, especially local or national politics. Retired civil servants seemed to have the upper hand combining their acquired linguistic jargons in a mixture of mother tongue or local language with English. Many villagers were left with astonishment as they admired the "learned friends". Such gatherings that Wafula's father attended faithfully gave him some measure of pride, since his son had qualified to study in the land of the Whiteman and would speak even better than the old intellectuals and pseudo-intellectuals. Pseudo-intellectuals because some of the men in the crowd feigned intelligence but were constantly glued to local and international media stations extracting information thus leaving the excited villagers in awe.

Wafula's father was not educated in the western academic system, nor in the local school, but was a very intelligent

man. Despite his lack of education, the man was an astute businessman who traded in goods in the border town. However, with the emergence of the Covid-19 or Corona virus the border had been closed after accusations and counter accusation that the other side was spreading the virus. This had led to stringent measures that curtailed movement. These restrictions had destroyed the border trade rendering Wafula's father and other traders redundant, leading to a period of frustration and penury for their families. The traders were forced to stay at home with no government incentives to cushion them. Hence life became unbearable. The period was particularly agonizing for the men who acted as the breadwinners of their households but had to stay at home while their children had pangs of hunger. The hunger was further exacerbated by two other factors; marauding locusts that had fed on crops and sporadic floods that were now forcing families to relocate after large losses. This was a period that Wafula wanted to forget, and of particular agony for him was the fact that he could not travel to further his education because of the grounding of planes and closing of local and international airports.

Initially when the virus had been reported, village life had not been too severely affected. The so-called village pseudo-intellectuals met at the market, predicting that it was a virus for Western countries and would never reach Africa. However, reality descended as all and sundry were glued to the presidential address to the nation, announcing a partial curfew because of infections from coronavirus. To many villagers this was not real. This was quite evident when numerous conflicts broke out around energized policemen who sought to enforce the curfew directive. The youth enjoyed the cat and mouse chase with the policemen as the curfew became a reality. Reports of deaths in the capital began to convince some villagers that the virus that was thought to have originated from China was real though most

of the villagers still felt that the virus was still a "myth". Thus government directives on control measures such as social distancing and keeping at home were ignored.

To Wafula, his world had come falling down. The young man had never left the village after schooling in the local primary and Secondary schools. The young man had achieved a stellar academic performance prompting one of the village sons in America to facilitate his admission to a top university. However, the many years of hard work seems to hang in a balance. Wafula feared that his family would be forced to use the money that had been raised for his air ticket because of his father's economic misfortunes. He shuddered at the thought and tried to stop thinking about it. However, the suffering in the household had increased as his father put on a brave face with stoic dignity. Wafula's every encounter with the old man was filled with tension, silence and uncomfortable stares of gloom and uncertainty. Fortunately, the old man never broached the unthinkable option.

As a rain soaked Wafula returned from delivering the milk, his mind was engulfed by thoughts that completely disassociated from his cold and wet body. He felt emotionless. The young man had been panting after a wild chase by policemen. The officers were striving to enforce the curfew, oblivious of the fact that to young men like Wafula delivering milk had become the only way to secure the bare necessities for their families. The young man clenched his teeth and fists, cursing the virus that had upended his life and made his future uncertain. □





Conversations... Covid-19.

By Biola
Olatunde.
Akure,
Nigeria.



I am still on my conversation trip. The recent conversation I am having at the moment is the concept of being a human being. I ask myself, what it really means to me to be a human being. I don't think I am an alien but I am simply worried at the level of our thought processes.

Just before the year ended and we were flung into 2020, the news got to us about Covid 19. I think it was because the pandemic started about that time in that year that they called it covid 19.

The point is, the figures started to rise into the thousands. It looked then like a Chinese problem. Some weeks later it became the problem of other countries and seemed to have ignored Africa.

We read about the story that the African was going to be immune to covid19. I remember the discussion within family and friends. We remembered the unease of the Ebola virus. I felt that when bad things roam the world, they tend to leave the worst part of themselves for Africans to grapple with. China came all over Africa I thought to spite the Americans. I am not into the politics of racism and generally feel that the Almighty has His own reasons for making me a Nigerian. I am not against saying hello to other races but I generally always wanted my own corner of the world. I always wanted to be back home within the four walls of my own home. I went to school in Lagos, had my first set of children there, but I knew when it was time to leave Lagos as it progressed from city to megapolis, so did it become less human and I wanted to remain a human being. See what I mean?

I have worked outside Nigeria, studied outside it and once lived for a while outside Nigeria, but I always wanted to be home. I never understood the craze of my friends to relocate, I thought that if I needed another country then the Almighty Father knows and would have done something about it. Used to tell my children that, and I think they decided what was best for them. They travel out and always came back home to Nigeria, though not necessarily my corner. How did we get to talking about me, I said I was having a conversation with me, my thoughts, my worries as a Nigerian with Covid 19.

The earlier stories we were told was that this virus was a respiratory thing. You needed to be sure it did not get through your nose. So you needed to cover your nose all the time, particularly if you were for any reason outside your own home. Keep to a regimen of washing your hands with running water. The first joke was when they showed a video of some guy washing his hands with running water. I pictured my home town and wondered if most of them ever saw what a running tap looked like. I live in the suburbs of the state capital, I have never seen a tap running water supplied by the government. When you see a tap, it is either a rich man's place or those boreholes that are placed at strategic

places. Not every street has a borehole placed for you to know what tap running water looked like. Sure, we have taps in the homes but they were generally decorative.

The truth of the matter is we evolved our own technology to make running water. Little buckets that had taps fixed at the bottom. We fetched the water and filled it. Twenty seconds? No, just wash your darn hands and get out. More times the public places don't have it. I sighed. We had bought sanitizers during the Ebola scare, I never liked monkeys and do not eat bush meat generally so I was okay and safe. Strangely though, they said nothing about monkeys this time.

They only said the virus like Ebola, came from monkeys. Then the Italian landed and Coronavirus also came with the Italian. When the Italian left, Coronavirus stayed back. The figures of the dead started getting higher. Our doubts deepened as we knew our politicians were never known for being altruistic. Some people survived, more people got infected, more people started dying. Running water, the cost of getting nose masks, went through the roof. Suddenly you became afraid of being old. You woke up each morning wondering how many more days. Palliatives? The government just heard those words and they used them freely not understanding the words and its attendant responsibilities. The fact of not being able to depend on your government for anything became a reality that stared at you more urgently. The supposed safety nets from government was either politicised or non-existent.

How do you test if you have Covid 19? You do not dare sneeze or cough because your scared neighbour might report you to the authorities. Do you have Covid-19 or malaria? In our herbal pharmaceutical tradition, you could consult those women in the market for them to prepare herbs for you to treat your cold or malaria, but the radio announcer is hysterical with the warning that you are not to self-medicate. Funny, that is how we did before: get the herbal drink or soup to treat the malaria or cold. You hear in the news that very important personalities had succumbed to Covid 19 and you wonder. You hold this conversation, how will the inadequacies of the government, their greed, dishonesty and thieving ways help you overcome your reasonable doubt about the veracity of Covid 19?

Your fear is spiced with anger and doubt as common sense tells you to stay well away from them and ask Mother Nature to show you what you must do to protect yourself from the baggage of the visitor who refused to leave even as you tell it that it was never invited. The stench of Covid 19 is why you cover your nose and face.□

Love in the time of the coronavirus

by Carolyn M. Acen, Kampala, Uganda.

My nose runs the treadmill.
My throat is drier than the Sahara.
Throbbing headache.
You say, love is the only cure.
Quarantined.
You are also in isolation.
We scribble on toilet paper.



i
Sentenced to this pandemic affair.
This purgatory slices my conscience
Like grape fruit.
Sticky fingers, muted conversations.
The isolation whips my tired back
with cowhide skin.
Your lips I cannot kiss.
Your embraces I miss.
Love is forlorn.
We mourn.

ii
Trapped in the 21st century gilded cage.
We strut about in the circumference of
Our cage in mental chains.
Hooked to sanitizers.
We wallow in an isolated fear of caress.
Distress.
Afraid to exhale.
This contagion is deep.
Yes!
We barricade our visage with a mask.
And wait for the system to
Annihilate us.

iii
Ghostly gazes.
The fever rises like steam.
Beguiling aura of
Desperation haunts me.
The streets are haunted with the fog
of Covid-19.
You, my truest form.
Commune with silence.
Eyes drain out like a broken faucet.
Faith falters.

iv
Systematically separated.
Even Maya Angelou crooned the
Plight of the caged bird.
Our desires are a
Precautionary measure.
An unlikely treasure.
Emotions are neatly
Folded like towels.
We burn out in this furnace.
Love is on a lock down.
The flights have stopped.
You, isolated.
I, wading through time.
How long must we wait to
Solemnize our desire for touch?

v
The numbers are up.
The media panics.
Death proves our meaty
Coat is fragile.
Your voice is frail.
We are frail.
Reality lurks like a terrible
Conspiracy theory.
Maybe it is just a cold.
But we are hooked to this fear.
Afraid of touch.
Still waiting to exhale.
Baby, allow me to rewrite my
Distress as the world screams.
Bear out my soul as beads of
Sweat fill my face.
For i am a daughter of
Longing unfulfilled.
Waiting on this contagion
to let go of the scythe
so you can dominate
my cries in the night.



A note from an upcountry in lockdown.

Stanley Gazemba, (normally) Nairobi, Kenya.

Strange corn tassels swaying in the wind in the fields around me; some red in colour, others a bright blonde, and others cream. Some of the stalks tall and muscular, and others squat and dwarfish, coming up to the waists of their giant neighbours.

And yet they both dance the same jig when the wind whistles through the fields

and drink of the same water when the dark skies open

up. Wondering if

there is racism

in the corn

as well...

Writing in the Times of the Coronavirus

By Peter
Ngila Njeri
Nairobi, Kenya.

During the first few weeks of the Coronavirus lockdown, I found myself feeling down. I had been used to going to work every day and writing only during the weekends. Then enter the Coronavirus lockdown; I couldn't read all the time. Because my laptop had been stuck away due to Coronavirus lockdown, for weeks I couldn't write anything.

After weeks of almost going mad, I was fortunate to go to the Nairobi CBD for some business. I did not know that trip would somewhat bring me back to writing. In the *matatu*, I sat next to a girl, who after some time, looked my way, and said, "I thought people are observing social distancing." I looked up from the novel I had been reading, and, slightly confused, told her, "I was told there was space in the *matatu*. The girl put back the earphone she had removed from her left ear and looked out the window.

I stopped reading.

Looking at the seat opposite the left aisle where I was sitting on, I found only one person sat at the window seat. I looked back and saw the same arrangement. It was around a week since the Coronavirus pandemic had really manifested in Kenya. It was surprising how my world could change in just a week. I found it intriguing to sit in a pair of seats all alone, a pair meant for two passengers. Although it was around eleven in the morning, I was disappointed to pay double the bus fare. At this time of the day, *matatus* used to charge as low as thirty bob, but on this particular Monday, I was shocked when the conductor didn't give me change from the hundred-shilling note I had handed him.

I had gone on this trip, not just because of the business, but also out of curiosity to see life during the times the Coronavirus. Because that day I boarded several *matatus*, I was surprised to see conductors carrying hand sanitizers, some of which, after rubbing and bringing my hands closer to my nose, I would realize was simply the *kinyozi* spirit – instead of the normal sanitizer smelling of vodka. The most shocking thing was the masks. I'm still trying to get used to wearing a mask for a long time. The thing pinches at my ears, and, because I don't like attention, as I walk along, I feel everyone's gaze on me. Whenever I step out of the house, I see masks of all colors of the rainbow around, which only reminds of doctors. It's funny how people can suddenly develop a fear for death. How people would suddenly start taking the virus seriously, something we had been used to seeing in the Internet in China and Italy and Spain.

Weeks after the trip to town, I found myself stressed for not writing for too long. I tried finding a provisional computer to use without much success. I barely slept. I could spend lots of time in the house, listening to some loud Spanish music, doing nothing, wishing only for the end to come faster. Then in the evening, I would take a long walk and visit my good writer friend and neighbor, Brian. With him, the laughter and the discussion on books and literature would reenergize me.

Days later, something in me awoke. I was determined to stay sane by carrying on with the writing. I powered on my old laptop. I decided to write with WordPad; the computer's Microsoft Word had expired years ago. Because I hadn't written anything for over two months, the first few days were the hardest. As days went by, I could lean the laptop against a plastic chair and sit on the couch mounted with two pillows. Because the laptop's waist is wasted, that was the option, and the writing picked up with time.

Using WordPad is interesting. WordPad doesn't show you at the bottom left side of the screen how many words you have written. WordPad doesn't also underline your misspelt words, so the writing flows! With time, I became used to it. I could type without thinking much, and after around two hours, I transferred the document into my phone, with whose MS Word I could check how much I had written.

Because my daily goal was around 3,000 per day, I could force myself to produce the targeted words. Before writing, I could take two mugs of coffee while listening to some fine Spanish music. That's how I managed, in a little over a month, to write the second and final part of the first draft of my novel manuscript, *The Visitation of Room Seventeen*. Though I'm happy to have finished on May 1, my back still aches because of sitting in a bended position.

The Coronavirus has brought the world to its knees, but I'm glad it has shown me I'm capable of becoming a more consistent writer. The pandemic has also confirmed my belief that the world is very small. See how 'loosely' we refer to the situation happening in America, in Europe and Africa, as if the continents are just cities in a country!□



COVID YOU

by Stevie Nii-Adu Mensah

aka Mensahighlife

Accra, Ghana

"Giving up is not an option!", Naaku said loudly to herself, as she for the second time since the virus first showed the world its ugly face, had embarked on a journey that would take her to Sowutuom Senior High School. Clad in a nose-mask way too big, that covered more than half her face, she was happy that she'd finally get to reunite with her fellow last year students. Nothing was going to trump her happiness. The President had spoken the night before, so she felt an instant conviction of "ebahii" to the core. The sun was out, yet there were grey clouds onboard, that was ready to kill any light on sight. They must have had plans to turn that day into night. As Naaku reached the courtyard to her school, she started to see raindrops hitting the concrete in front of her. Fortunately for her, she was always ready with an umbrella, packed inside of her schoolbag. As she reached for the thing that was going to keep her dry, she fumbled with her grip, and instead dropped the umbrella in a puddle on the ground. As she kneeled down to pick it up, it was as if the sky just opened up and started pouring out all the liquid that the heavens could assemble. She was suddenly swimming in her own fears. Completely aware of the impact the Quarantine and Lockdown caused when it came to threading over the thin line of Strength and Insecurity. Naaku started crying profusely. She was so(ul) happy. The rain hid her joy outwardly, but allowed her to shine brighter than the hidden sun, inside. She no longer had anything to prove to her classmates. Who even cared if she had doubts? Wasn't she human? Her best friends

Compassion & Ego never used to play together, and slowly she started to understand why. The heavy amount of water that had covered the town of Sowutuom reminded her of Compassion, while her hot-tempered friend Ego had a difficult time in re-lighting her fire, but that was OK. She once was blind then she could see. From a blurred reality, to a normal visual acuity. They all complimented each other though, and became aware that they were going to have an interesting term ahead of them.

Fading into a Black Hole

by Godfrey Kariuki
Nairobi, Kenya

Fading into a black hole
With time every thing must fade
Goodness lasts for. Awhile
When the rivers of humanity thirst for rain drops
Even saint's hearts are tingled with envy and evil
Stranger things happen
When Time does not always meet its promises
Of eternal time and precious tomorrow
Swallowed over and spat out at the age of forgotten dials
Without any doubt, tomorrow too is overridden
Like the sultan's war horse from the battle
It gets fed up of catching up with the classics and newer stronger legacies
Quietly the old man must flutter the eyelids and sleep
Never to wake up from a slumber which it too is doubt filled
At eternity then would I doubt of a dream of fallacy
Till I prove in its non-existence of unknown truths
That only lies in knowing the secrets of creation and death

Look, we're under one sky

by Ray Mwachiki
Nairobi, Kenya

Look up.

There's a roof over your head or a sky so vast it holds not just you but everyone else.

Wherever you are whether under the trees with the rain beating down on you or,

Fighting the emptiness within those walls or,

Worrying not about tomorrow but, how you'll survive this day

Look up.

Look up till you see the sky

Join the legion looking up with you

You're not alone.

And as sure as the cloudy sky clears

And the new moon grows full

And the dark sky brings light

Light will surely come your way

If it doesn't come today

Look up.

From the night comes day.



Twice a Wounded Child

by Haroun Risa
Nairobi, Kenya.

We went out, armed with a purpose fueled by the venom spewed through a microphone, and we chopped them all because we were the ones who thought were right, like a Kenyan parent.

Drip.

Blood mingled with the raindrops falling from the iron roof, with both joining up to be a subtle reminder of that message we were told. "Tuko Pamoja."

Drip.

But the funny thing was,
Sometimes water had more use than blood.
Sometimes water saved more lives than blood.
Sometimes water had more value than blood.
Sometimes blood wasn't always thicker than water.

Drip.

And the chilly reminder I couldn't help but reflect on, heard from the lips that released a spirit thanks to an inevitable expiry date;
"Stand for what you want, or be forced to take anything you're offered."

Drip.

There was a day we were so poor Mum took wheat & boiled it like rice.
In that gesture it was clear,
What else am I to do?
There are tummies to be filled, formed after 9 months, & now have to be filled for 18 years.

Drip.

Twice a wounded child's destiny, to be always right despite accepting to be always wrong.
Twice a wounded child, to be cherished when being formed, and to be frowned upon after not being the form that was expected.
Twice a wounded child, to conform because of a hollowness of never having a purpose or belonging, and to carve out a solo journey that gives more belonging, purpose and identity.

Drip.

In that whole time the crushing realization sinks in upon missing a few periods, that they weren't just tummies that required filling, with the knowledge that she was still a wounded child who also had to be her own nurturing parent, and had to be the captain to a ship whose responsibili-

ties were bigger than the Titanic, and were bound to eventually sink in.

Drip.

The repeating 2's glimpsed were the silent reminder that a ship now knew one captain, and others had already sunk theirs.

Drip.

A plague to be rejected at the expense of losing a belonging, and being the half-blood who saw beyond the norms that the sheep conformed to, and a veil to be dropped at the craving for freedom to be one within before an inevitable expiry date forever denied one a life to learn from and a legacy to leave behind.

Drip.



Solitude: Joyous Alone

by Victor Zuze
Blantyre, Malawi.

I am the radiant sun surrounded not by any cloud;
The cool breeze that kisses the skin about your bones in summer;
The shimmering moon unescorted by stars;
Silence sounds mellifluous to my ears
Purdah reverberates the quiescence of water dripping exuberantly in a streamlet
I find twirls of joy
in between the beatings of my heart.
Only in sheer ***solitude***
does my mind take flights of imagination
Reaching dimensions where the world
is imbued with possibilities;
Taking me where my life
is high spirited of its passions;
A world where
only placidity dwells
is solely intermediate between the past second
and the second to come when my soul flutters by itself.
I am but a traveler touring a paradise of aloneness;
Letting the world slip away amidst Covid 19.

Malam Bala and the Coronavirus.

by Patricia Idisi, Lagos, Nigeria.

Malam Bala held tenaciously onto his transistor Radio to listen to the morning news. "Good morning this is Sunshine 100. 3 FM. This is the morning news hour at 8.00. My name is Amina Ameen. 10,250 persons have been tested positive for dreaded Coronavirus. Owing to this spike, the government has decided to put a total lockdown on the Banji emirates from tomorrow, the 12th of May."

Malam Bala screamed. "Walahi this lie faa, this is a big lie! This is government magic! This is a lie!" "Haaha! What is a big lie? Who is doing magic? Why are you

Bala shouted.

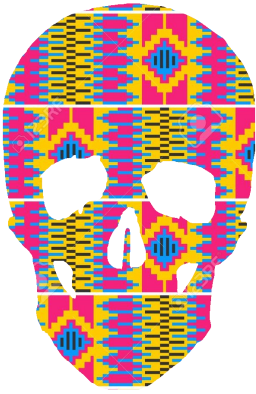
"I believe, if you must know," replied Baba Risi, giving him a mean look.

"Look Bala, it is time you drop these conspiracies of yours and let us all join hands with the government to keep safe.

Observe all the health protocols to ensure we flatten the curve. It is important to protect ourselves and every member of our families, ok?" Baba Risi schooled him. "Ok" Bala replied in disbelief. "Tell me right now Baba Risi, have you used your two corocoro eyes to see anybody who

the premises to commiserate with Malam Bala and Alimotu. Baba Risi came to console them. He sat down on the low but comfortable sofa. "Take heart," he said, patting Bala on the shoulder. "But what happened to him..." Alimotu replied. "He just returned from my sister's place two days ago, coughing. He also said he is was feeling pain," cried Alimotu, shaking her head.

"Calm down, calm down," Baba Risi said, becoming apprehensive. "Please these are some of the symptoms of Coronavirus." "Coro what!?" screamed Bala



screaming this morning Maigida? Alimotu, petite wife of Malam Bala, queried.

"I said this is a lie," shouted Malam Bala, roughly shoving Alimotu aside. A bewildered Alimotu hissed in anger.

Malam Bala, a middle-aged man of average height, was poorly educated but fond of getting relevant information of daily happenings around him and you could not separate Mr Malam from his potable transistor radio.

"Gbammm! gbammm!!" Malam Bala knocked violently on the door of his friend and neighbor Baba Risi.

"Who is that! Who wants to break down my door this morning?" shouted Baba Risi.

Malam Bala rushed in, panicking. "Have you heard? Don't tell me you have not heard! Or didn't you listen to the news on Sunshine FM this morning!?"

Baba Risi looked at him with a frown on his face. "Heard what please Bala? What is the problem if I may ask you?"

Bala dumped himself on the massive sofa in Baba Risi's apartment, fixing his gaze on Baba Risi, and said "Coronavirus cases are now 10,250. 10,250! Can you believe this?!" Malam

have the corona virus. That is question number one. Question number two: Where are the people? If you can answer this I will believe you," Bala said angrily.

"Look," replied Baba Risi. "This your illiteracy is more deadly than the Coronavirus. C'ommon, leave my house," he said, now in rage.

"I should leave? I should leave?! Me! Bala leave your house?! Now I know your head is not correct."

Bala stormed out of the room banging the door making Baba Risi start. "Never come here again ok! Nonsense-man!" Baba Risi shouted after him.

"Sule! Sule!! Sule!!!" there were shouts and uproar at Malam Bala's apartment. Alimotu held unto her 18 year old son who had collapsed. His temperature was so high she didn't know what to do. She was crying profusely.

Malam Bala raced inside to behold the sight of his son gasping for breath. "Sule! Sule!!!" He shook his son. He quickly requested an herbal concoction which he tried to force into his son's mouth, but he couldn't get him to swallow it.

Malam Bala screamed as he watched his son give up his breath. Neighbors were seen in pockets standing around

and Alimotu simultaneously.

"Yes" retorted Baba Risi. "I suspect Coronavirus."

"Are you mad! It is not possible for my son to have coro," replied Malam Bala.

"Well you will have to take the test. Let me wash my hands and get my face mask as you too can be a risk to everyone of us here."

"Coro what coro faa!" Malam Bala's neighbors all scrambled out of Bala's apartment for fear of contracting the virus. "Sule has coro sule has coro! Haa coro!"

Baba Risi called the health authorities in Banji's emirates to report the death of his son. The health authority came immediately geared up to take samples and investigate. Malam Bala was diagnosed with Coronavirus after his samples were collected and taken to the isolation center in the Banji district for treatment. He was put in a bed. He cried when he saw others who were infected. He regretted all his carefree and careless actions, which led to the death of his only son Sule. □

Lockdown scenes from Dandora Phase 4 & 5



Steve Maneno, Nairobi, Kenya.



RIAAAN OPPELT CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

THE BOYS IN THE BOX

Lulibo almost touched the glass wall, seeing tall, firm trees vaguely reflected, and dissolving into the figures on the other side of the glass. She then moved farther away. It was high noon, the time when most of the girls in the town came to gather outside the glass box mounted into the wall of rock above the town. Older women gathered as well, standing behind the teenage girls staring into the box. Occasionally, young women paused for a second to look at the box on their way to or back from work. The glass was indestructible.

There were other towns with boxes. Although a uniform standard of safety and security had been agreed upon, the towns had their diverse methodologies. While it should have been obvious, the legal ramifications of no two systems of women leadership being the same needed to be ratified in endless affidavits. The rollout of the boxes to all towns around the country was only in its early phase but the entire world was watching the towns with the looking glass boxes.

Lulibo had come out of the autumn shade, her white and grey tunic absorbing the electricity hanging in the air. She moved closer to the box again, whereas she ordinarily stood behind a far tree and observed the girls and women studying the box. She obeyed the rules of social distancing that applied even here. The box inmates were spectacular creatures who were beginning to show the first signs of wear and deterioration.

Willie, for instance. Young Willie, with the blonde hair and blue eyes, who dressed like a cowboy from old movies, even to a waistcoat and a hat. Willie with his pleading face, and little theatrical shows of entertainment aimed at generating laughs, confidence and pity. But they all knew Willie, and remembered what got him sent to the box. In any case, he had long ago been confirmed as a health risk, as were all the others in the box; they were also quarantine cases. The women had suffered very few transmittable diseases since the box was first implemented. The town mothers knew that the curiosity and yearnings of the younger women, not all of them, would be a factor but they did not cover the box, as some had requested and petitioned. Many things would be adjust-

ed to, the town mothers had said, and they ensured the humane practices were held to a strong, acceptable standard.

Such conditions were, by now, typical in the town, which was located far outside any metropolitan area, high up in the mountains. The glass caught the sun but did not overheat those in the box, who had the benefit, provided by the engineers, of climate control. One of the inmates, Waanie, was married to the chief engineer. They also had the shade of the cavernous rock the box was fitted into. The inmates had cordoned zones, or blocks to operate in, with one communal area for those who could mingle in harmony. Educational content was broadcast to them in all the languages they understood, and mutual language learning was encouraged.

None of them could dislodge the braces around their right ankles. If they moved beyond their restricted zones in the box, a debilitating pulse was emitted from the braces. Any group disorder was met by a nerve agent filtered through the air vents. The Geneva Convention did not disavow this, the country's revised Constitution made allowance for it and researchers for the continental Criminal Justice Reform did not object. The ankle braces also monitored vital signs and were programmed to signal any change in body functioning, thereby alerting the authorities of any illness or irregularity that was not a pre-existing condition. Toilet and shower facilities, with privacy, were provided at the back wall and under the roof of rock. There were no escape outlets and nothing detachable to use as weapons. Food was delivered to one inmate at a time. Thando, the boy closest to the receiving slot at the front right corner of the glass wall, was temporarily unbraced to serve the food trays to each inmate, and to collect the trays again after eating. Demure and polite, he was rewarded with a lighter sentence for his services.

Lulibo remembered that when the first ones were sent to the box, the mood in the town changed immediately. She had heard that this happened in the other towns, too. She was fascinated but never shirked her priorities and responsibilities, and the town mothers expected no less. However, like some of the girls, Lulibo could not help but to gaze with a certain fascination and something that felt like desire. Perhaps this was kindled by the unusual sight of the male box, and the clear demarcation of power women now had. Some of the inmates offered forlorn, motherless appearances crying for help and nurture. Others exuded menace and upsetting glares, reminding their audiences of what they were sent in for. One or two seemed indifferent, depressed, self-absorbed and possibly even arrogant. Others, like Mzo, invited the eyes of the girls and the women by simply being himself, looming over the others and displaying the statue of his body, tall, strong and unavoidable. He grinned some days. Once, he stood naked and proud, knowing exactly that he would cause alarm, but that the alarm would take a while to sound.

Lulibo both laughed and grimaced at that memory. Her friend Brigid came up to her afterwards and asked, 'Did you see how Mzo was looking at me?' Brigid's friend Catherine had been involved with Mzo once and Lulibo always thought this had rankled her. It seemed petty enough but it struck her that, before, (cont.)

(Oppelt cont.) there had not even been room for pettiness, such was the brutality of daily life for each woman in the town.

All women were safe. All women. Some of them, the town mothers said, were now also safe from themselves. The boxes earned universal admiration and outcry. One pandemic was re-routed to serve another with a hateful, sexist agenda, commentators from elsewhere shouted. Feminism had been set back, cried some, while others retorted by asking which feminisms. The battles between women, others warned, would be telling and disturbing, and would imbalance what had taken centuries to gain. Intersections would be erased. The eccentric fit and improbable success of the boxes invited frivolous questions centered on the government's maternal slant, which, some complained, merely replaced the outmoded paternal line. How do you ban cigarettes and then ban men after that? Cynics offered that it helped the women to be entitled to all available alcohol as it passed the hours that were both celebratory and frustrating.

The decision for the boxes in some of the towns was hard-won. Many amendments were debated and mass mobilization ensued. But the protests, the promises from male leaders and all the stringent lockdown curfews were never going to deliver the results. It took more extreme steps, starting with the formula introduced to alcohol that incapacitated only the targeted men drinking it. The oral and written records of each man were brought to light, although most testimonies only emerged when the men had already been boxed. The men who were not boxed were themselves zoned off to an isolated part of the town and were not allowed near the box. Such men were not plentiful. There was outrage at their being separated, which was labelled as discriminatory.

Certain men pleaded that they did not belong in the box and that it was impossible for them to be charged with any crime. Some women did not want to lose their partners and resisted the findings. Among the younger women, there were those who argued against the town mothers and they drew on their degrees and qualifications. Many of the town mothers, however, also had degrees and qualifications, and had a better understanding of the areas between tradition and change. The town mothers were not exclusively elders. Many younger women among them had also made the sacrifice of their partners for the betterment the box provided. The filing system detailing the history of the males in the box was intricate, advanced and not easily compromised. It was an archive against silence, an archive unleashing powerful magic when it was opened. The box had been carefully occupied and arranged, as one would pack a box of delicate items and living memories.

Lulibo found the rock she always perched on, the one in a clearing that offered an oblique view of the box. She sat down, ready to sketch the scene. She grinned as she tore out the sketch of Mzo, pausing for a second to inspect how she depicted some of the faces transfixed on him. She also tore out the sketch of Waanie, his wife's face tattooed on his arm. She wondered whether it was justifiable to have such ease and control when she

sketched, and whether she had a right to capture others in their layered distresses so rapidly and effortlessly.

With suddenness, Willie lurched forward from his block. He reached the glass wall and banged his fist against it; there were tears in his eyes. Lulibo could not hear his words and tried reading his lips. He was mouthing a plea, perhaps for release, or because of pain and discomfort, or perhaps asking for forgiveness, true forgiveness and salvation. She moved her pencil over the paper as fast as she could. Within seconds, Willie was stunned and he fell over, his body convulsing until he lay still, disheveled, his legs spread and his cowboy hat covering his face. Mzo looked down at him, standing like a tower, and then looked out at Lulibo, who was capturing the moment with a frenetic excitement. She missed the sad eyes of Thando, cast over Willie, then on Mzo, then on the others who were all looking away, who only regarded him when he served their food. He then looked out at Lulibo, who was not sketching him. □

Covid-19 is an enemy the world couldn't figure out how to tackle Machiek Akuocpiir Cayier South Sudan

The most unfortunate virus;
The world had no idea how it has fought us.
Maybe the man created Covid Nineteen;
That resulted into the disaster we've seen.
In the dawn of the new decade;
We have lost, whole lot of our facades.
In South Sudan, the youth couldn't believe;
How they have been deceived.
By the government's directives;
They want to know the Chinese motives.
Madagascar's herbs became viral;
How it's president claimed the use of herbal.
Africa danced to Madagascar's medicines;
World Health Organization recommended no vaccines.
South Sudan's health minister was lost in thoughts;
She didn't know what the pandemic would cost.
In the lockdown where the people had no basic necessities;
The implementation of the peace deal led to anxieties.
Government officials only caught Covid Nineteen;
Ordinary citizens called it a mere coldness.
The old men and women always panicked;
That the virus only affects, the fifty something onwards.
Everyone became an internet raven;
They have refused to be citizens.
Many girls became online pirates;
Young men have gotten lots of dates.
South Sudan interim period is an hoax;
Politicians are enclosed inside the box.
The high level task force for covid nineteen;
Is an ultimate project.
Millions of dollars consumed for masks and gloves.
And the men whose feet the pope kissed are still the probes.
Reopening of all institutions is a mystery;
The president hide himself already.
President Salva Kiir cursed the people who wished him death.
The country operated for over four months with no state governors.
Covid nineteen is an enemy;
The world couldn't figure out how to tackle.

Lies that aren't working anymore.

by Prof. Mark Chetambe
Nairobi, Kenya.

1. I am working late.

2. I am at the barbershop, will be late.

3. I am waiting for traffic to clear.

4. I am meeting Brian for a drink.

5. I am working this weekend.

6. Nabomolewa nywele salon.

7. I am eating out,
usiniwekee supper.

8. Sikuona news aki.

9. Nangoja deal fulani iive nikulipe.

10. Nikifika Nai nitakupigia.

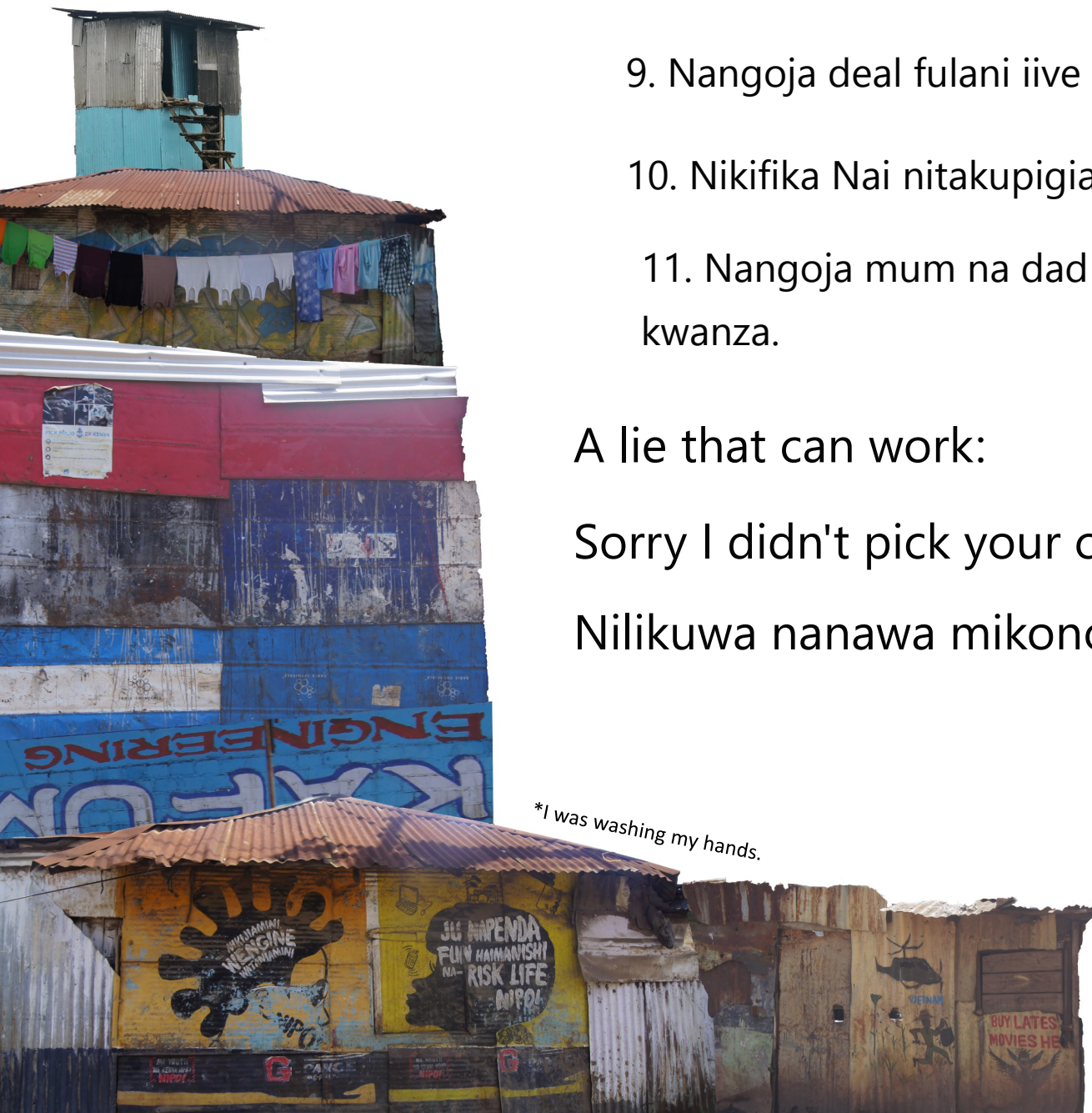
11. Nangoja mum na dad watoke
kwanza.

A lie that can work:

Sorry I didn't pick your call.

Nilikuwa nanawa mikono.*

**I was washing my hands.*



The end is yet to come

by Ikenna Okeh

Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

I wake up feeling like a feather on a windy day.

Maybe I do not describe how I feel properly, but I want you to know that it is not the kind of lightness you'll like; I went to bed on an empty stomach: not just me, but the rest of the family.

The last of the food in the house was wiped out at lunch time yesterday, and as evening approached, none dared ask the other what we would be having for supper. It was a silent fear. You whispered it to yourself and hoped the other thought the same thing you were thinking. But somehow, you suspected they are. You actually knew. It's in everyone's eyes. It's in their quiet sighs and their hisses weighted down into silence.

I stir upon my bed of wrappers laid out on the floor. Of late I have come to favour sleeping on a wrapper spread out on the floor. The mattress on the bed has grown too thin that the feel of the underlying wooden framework makes my body feel run over and broken every morning.

I roll over, facedown. My breath feels hot and comes shortened. I don't like hunger. I'm never used to it, and still haven't gotten used to it, not even in this lockdown. It looks to be morning. Sure, it is. The brightness through the window says as much. I'm scared to face the uncertainty of a new day.

There's no food. How can I survive it?

A new brightness comes upon the room. I pop an eye open to investigate. It's the light bulbs. Electricity has come on. The ceiling fan begins to swirl with a grinding sound, voicing its reluctance. It may be hunger too. I should get up and turn off the light bulbs, I think. And the fan too. They are not needed at this time of the day, and it should

save cost turning them off. But where do I find the energy for such trifle efforts as getting up and flicking and turning off switches? I hiss. Damn it.

Damn everyone

The light goes out. And the fan too. It swirls to a halt, braking to a final stop with one prolonged groan. Perhaps the fan and the light bulbs hear me swear. No they did not. It is the electricity. It has gone out. *Damn the electricity company!* They are useless and we have grown used to their uselessness. It's become something to be taken for granted, and we must seek normalcy abroad should we desire and have the means. I hiss. Thinking is just too strenuous and I shouldn't be depleting what scarce store I have remaining in some unknown part of me.



Footfalls approach. They don't stop at my door but stamp past. The door next to mine in the small lobby opens and shuts noisily.

"It is well, it is well, with my soul ..."

It is my mother singing. She must have returned from church. It had been an all night prayer service and she had spent the night away from home. I hear another voice. It's my sister's. She's talking to my mother, and my mother's voice is louder. It's about the all night prayer service they are discussing with excitement. My mother is telling her how the service went. The turnout was large, she says.

I don't want to think or listen to anything. It would be better for me that my mind is kept blank. Thinking or processing any information, for that matter, can drain me out at this point. It is better I use what is left of my little energy store to breathe and stay alive. Is it not at this stage that animals in the wild hibernate?

"If you see the things that happened,

eh. It was miraculous."

Damn it!

What is it with these people and their obsession with church? Why would people still go to church at this time when everybody is social distancing? And they would even give offerings while at it!

I want my mind blank! Or do they want another miracle to happen with my death this morning? Damn! I want to shout at them to keep quiet. But I can't. Not at my mother. It's just inconceivable, the mere thought of it. I can't shout, still. It would be madness to expend the energy so.

My phone rings.

Who the hell?

I pick it up.

"Hello."

It is Ella. Her voice is unmistakable even though I do not recognize the number.

"How far?" she asks.

I don't know what to say. But I will have to lie. We do so all the time when asked *how far?*

"Cool. You?"

"I'm just okay"

A moment of silent passes. It is only her breathing I hear. I think she hears mine too.

"What about that stuff?" My heart appears to turn to jelly and drip into my stomach. "I need it."

I steel myself, hoping not to give away the weakened state of my nerves at that moment. "I don't have it yet"

"I told you I want to start a business with it."

Who starts a business in a lockdown?

I know she does not need it as desperately as she lets on. She just wants to make life a living hell for me. **(cont.)**

(Okeh cont.) I still have a soft spot for her, but things are not working out as sweetly as they initially were.

We had been so hopeful, but here we are. She knows this. She senses that it is over. I know it's been a while she came to that conclusion and I think it pisses her off that I'm not on my knees begging and courting her attention. Hence she wants to get back all the money she's given me in the past months. She knows I don't have all that money now, but tormenting me seems to be her new found pleasure until she gets her money.

"I will give you your money once I get it."

"Is that why you don't call or pick my calls?"

"Ella, I have your account number. I swear, I will pay off every dime you've given me."

"Okay"

A moment of silence.

"Did you go out today?" I ask. *Foolish question.*

"It's a lockdown."

"Can I see you?"

"No. We don't leave the house. It's my dad's order."

Stupid me.

"Okay. Bye, then."

"Bye"

I mentally kick myself. There's just not going to be any mending things up with Ella. The idea is just too ridiculous to entertain. Already I'm feeling too weak from the exhaustion and hunger is beginning to gnaw at the walls of my belly. My hands are not steady. They quiver lightly. I am sweating inside of me. Hunger can kill. It can crawl up on you, shroud you with hopelessness and eat you out. They say it is the only thing that beats a child in the presence of its mother.

I shut out all thoughts from my mind. They are not looking to make sense any more. No wonder people advise never to make a decision on an empty stomach. I lie still, measuring out my breathing.

The discussion next room filters in. Someone is rummaging through a shopping bag. Could be my mother or sister.

"Wow! All of these?"

It's my sister's voice.

"Yes," my mother replies.

"Everybody got at least a paint rubber of rice, amongst other things."

I don't wait to check if I am hearing correctly but somehow I have sprung to my feet. Straight out of my room and into the next room, I head. My sister is seated at the edge of the bed, with my mother standing. On the floor about her feet is scattered parcels of rice, beans, garri and a tuber of yam. There is also a carton of noodles, a tin of groundnut oil and a crate of eggs.

They read my questioning look. I must have looked like an explorer who unexpectedly had stumbled upon the hidden treasures of the Incas.

"We got it from the church," my mother explained with a look of triumph.

"How come?"

"The church shared it to every member."

God is alive. My heart swells. God is alive, and so we will survive this day.□

What if?

by Collins Paris,
Nkana-Kitwe, Zambia

What if?.....

What if love is a fantasy
What if songs had no chorus

What if muse is from the devil
What if poetry is evil

What if wrong is right
What if darkness is light

What if you are dreaming
What if you are not living

What if scars are to glory
What if saints are not holy

What if we're in paradise
What if corona doesn't exist

What if love is a dream
What if we're in spirit realm

What if hearts were ain't fragile
What if in life were no struggle

What if blessings turn into curse
What if eyes stop shading tears

What if storms can't be calmed
What if we're in a new world

I Can't Breathe

by Benjamin Chelangat
Nairobi, Kenya

My neck pains
My heart is stopping.
Officers please,
I can't breathe.

I am suffocating...
I am dying
Please I can't breathe.

Officer,
My body is leaving me
My breath is blowing away
To the windless end
Where eternal lives live.

I can rest now in peace
In this immortal home
Somewhere beyond the mortal flaws
Where love is boundless.

Three poems

A New Me

by Lughano
Mwangwegho,
Blantyre, Malawi

I am
My own mind,
A rebirth of the past

An image
Of mankind
That will not last

A present
Of all that is behind
And buried in the dust

I am
A new beginning,
Unafraid of sunset

The first page
Before you start flipping
To read the rest

The advent
Of ways of winning.
I am the best

Coronavirus In Africa

by Solomon Smart S. Bangura
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Covid 19 is getting known like Mandela
in Africa.

Similarly like Ebola, what is it after?
The sirens just keep blaring one right
after another.

Let bygones be bygones and go talk to
your brother.

Let's keep washing hands at least, five
times an hour.

Sanitize and use hand cream that smells
just like a flower.

It's key not to shake the hand of another.
If you can't mask up, then don't walk
farther.

In Africa, the sun rose each day.
And so did Covid 19's numbers.
Sometimes we wonder, when would this
pandemic be over?

All we had were our imaginings;
We saw it as tales from the western richer
countries...

Deformed, distended and tailored to our
land.

Now, we are carefully cultivating fears...
For we have suffered pains and agony all
these years.

Covid Everywhere

by Lughano Mwangwegho,
Blantyre, Malawi

Covid in the train
Covid everywhere
Causing pain

Covid in the street
Covid is a scare-
No doctor can treat

Covid in the office
Covid in the air
For vendors to make profits

Covid in the home
Covid here, covid there
Regardless of where it came from

Covid in the palace
Covid doesn't care
As long as one is careless



Lockdown

by Ray Mwhaki
Nairobi, Kenya

We were dying anyway.
Not from the rabid rona,
That flies from that continent to this
Aboard the privileged
Whose worries are the cancellation of Sunday polo at Racecourse
And the diminished brunch options.

We were dying anyway
Not a drop to feed a family of four
Behind closed doors for a month
Because Corona didn't affect the black
So privilege went from bar to meeting to funeral to whore house
Testing theories that got the country hiding
From airborne death

We were dying anyway
No matatu to get us home.
Home where emptiness lives
From 2pm-6pm waiting for overpriced transportation that can barely be afforded
Then came the army, the police and their chests, whips, guns and teargas
We cry on the ground, less than an inch from the other
Too poor to make it home
Too worthless to be afforded dignity

We were dying anyway
Before the police descended on us for Corona
They descended on us for protesting- for life
They descended on our children playing on balconies
They knocked down our doors
For riff raff don't belong even where they do
We were dying from debt, high taxes, toxic food

Slowly.
Maybe Corona will be the end
Of our slow painful deaths

Suffering is short-lived

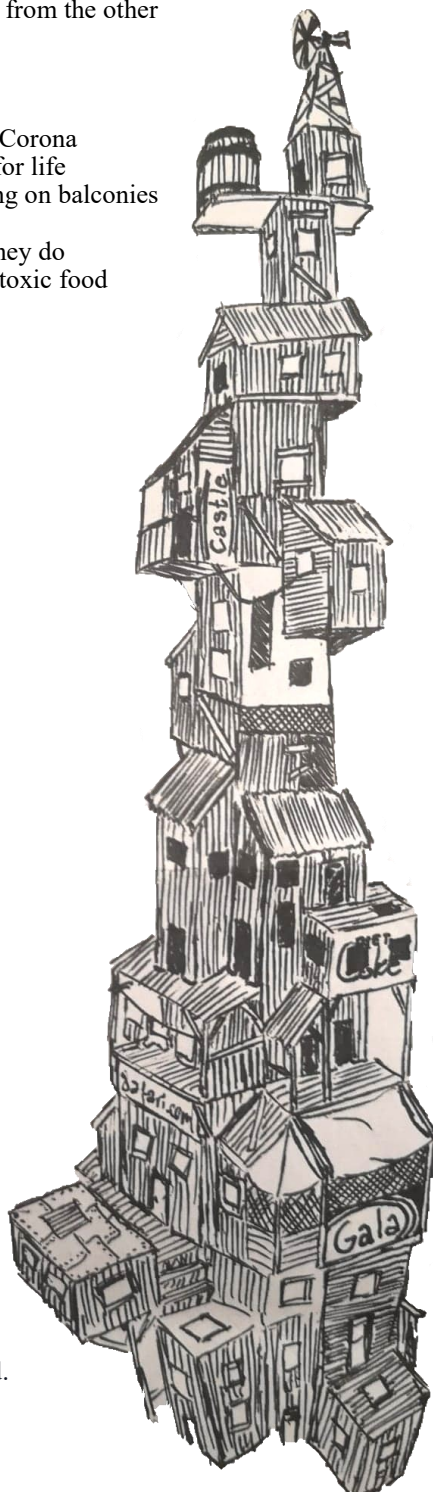
by Young Francis
Bolgatanga, Ghana.

Suffering won't kill us
At least not in our day
For we have strong hearts
Posing might of grace

If you endure suffering
This poem will not die
In suffering, you're building
A ladder to the sky

Suffering won't break you
At least not with our deeds
For we're honest and truth
And will sail through the sea

Being poor makes us rich
For all that we live today
As we cut the strongest bricks
The greatest walls are being laid.



“Corona virus free”

by Nahida Esmail
Tanzania

The first in Africa to become ‘corona virus free’
The land of Kilimanjaro and spice tea

Could it be that people are not getting tested?
Or has the disease really been eliminated?

The test kit tested positive for a sample of a goat
Now, don't get tested even if you have a sore throat

The pawpaw exposed the faulty test kits
Every day, a new finding about how the virus transmits.

Neighboring countries have strict rules
Lockdown means no schools

The President of Burundi died,
Some said due to Corona, but they lied

When the symptoms are chronic
Is the solution the Madagascar tonic?

People around the world are still dying
In isolation, many are crying

Has God only answered our prayers?
While others still shed tears?

The advice is to still take precautions
Wash your hands and continue to be cautious

COVID – Nineteen
Teaching us how to keep clean

A pandemic, the world is fighting
To keep these memories, keep journaling

Do I hear you ask
“Should I wear my mask?”

By protecting yourself, you will protect others
Your mothers and your brothers.

Don't get too complacent
For COVID 19 can wipe out a nation

Of Days Gone By

by Prosper Masimba Kavunika
Zimbabwe

As days go by and by
The joys we merry
The sorrows we cry
The hopes we pray
And the drought left us dry
To the ones we loved, we have to say bye
Still the deep thought of wonder
left us looking up to the sky.

Ozara Collins Adolf is based in Nigeria and is a history graduate from the University of Benin. He is a prolific writer, author of *Mute Ant*, a graphic designer and 3D animator.

Haroun Risa is an actor, poet and the author of a series of books about the sex trade and human trafficking in Kenya, called *Momabasa Raha My Foot*. He is affiliated with the Afrikan Film Centre in Nairobi and has appeared in the Netflix series *Sense8* and a number of feature films. #mombasarahamyfoot

Victor Zuze is a writer from Blantyre, Malawi. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education (Languages), from the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. Victor has been writing poetry, short stories and articles for four years now and is currently working on publishing his debut poetry collection. The writer works as an Educator of English at the moment.

Victoria Hasheela-Mufeti (DSc) is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Computing, at the University of Namibia. She has a passion for writing fiction and poems. She has authored children books in Oshikwanyama as well as a novel in English: *Her Interview*. She grew up in Endola, a village in Northern Namibia and currently resides and works in Windhoek.

Mark Frygell is a visual artist based in Stockholm, Sweden. His has had exhibitions in many museums and art galleries around the country and is represented by the Stockholm based art gallery Andréhn-Schiptjenko. He is also a tattoo artist.

Solomon Smart S. Bangura is a young Sierra Leonean author, poet and a humanitarian. He is a student at the Institute of Public Administration and Management, at the University of Sierra Leone. He wants to be known in his country as a young leader whose positive deeds spread across Africa and the world.

Antony Mukasa Mate, PhD, is a lecturer at Chuka University, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. He is interested in gender studies, popular culture and Kenyan and Caribbean literatures. He is involved in youth empowerment, as a chairperson of the empowerment group Bidii Sports Academy.

Steve Makeno is a professional driver and amateur photographer, based in Nairobi. He is interested in travel and football, among other things. If you need a ride in Nairobi, he is your guy.

Prosper Masimba Kavunika is originally from Zimbabwe but is currently based in Johannesburg. He enjoys expressing himself through writing, particularly poetry and aphorisms.

Tuntufye Simwimba is a Malawian writer. He is a trained lawyer who writes to deal with boredom. Some of his work appears in *Imagine Africa 500* and *The Familiar Stranger*.

Riaan Oppelt, PhD, is a musician, writer and playwright based in Cape Town. He is also a lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch, where he teaches South African literature and film studies, among many other things.

Patricia Idisi is a freelance writer and social enthusiast. She is a content creator for political campaigns, motivational talks and marketing. She enjoys short stories with social impact. She studies creative writing for Biola Olatunde and likes to surf the internet, meet people and decorate.

Nicklas Hallén lives in Stockholm, Sweden. He is a lecturer in literature in English at Karlstad University and a researcher at Uppsala University, where he is part of the project African Street Literature. His research focus is on (mainly Kenyan and Nigerian) self-published literature. He likes underground rock n roll music, gardening and to travel (particularly in Africa).

Collins Mwansa Paris is a writer, poet, singer and songwriter from Nkana-Kitwe, Zambia.

Patricia Idisi is a freelance writer and social enthusiast. She is a content creator for political campaigns, motivational talks and marketing. She enjoys short stories with social impact. She studies creative writing for Biola Olatunde and likes to surf the internet, meet people and decorate.

Snothile Gumede is a poet and a literary scholar from Durban, South Africa. She runs the blog *Rural Snob*, where she publishes her poetry.

Ikenna Okeh lives in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. He writes narrative poetry, crime novels and children's books set in Nigeria. He also promotes music on Ubuntu FM, an online radio station and music promotion platform, which he co-founded. His books include *The Way of All Things*, *An Eye for an Isle*, *When Everyone Sings*, *The Man who Thought Little of Himself*, *A Tale of Twist* and *The Operative*.

Benjamin Chelangat is a high school teacher of English Literature in Kenya. He has written more than fifty poems and three short stories. His have featured in various anthologies.

Stevie Nii-Adu Mensah AKA Mensahighlife is based in Accra, Ghana and is a writer and a creative artist who rose from a family of professional musicians and dancers. He has incorporated the rhythmic punctuations of his elders, in his way of writing. Stevie's debut novel *It's Cold Oo: Bridges Ova Attukwei* is a story about hiding from one's fears.

Tshomarelo Mosaka is a musician and music journalist from Rakops, Botswana. He is the frontman of a African death metal band Overthrust and he owns *Vulture Thrust Metal Magazine* through which he exposes the African metal scene to the world and global metal to Africa.

Lughano Mwangwego is a Malawian poet, short story writer and playwright. He is the author of four collections of poetry, *Shadows of Footsteps*, *Echoes of a Whisper*, *Unsung Songs* and *Breaking the Chains* and a play, *A Love Triangle*. He currently lives in Blantyre, Malawi and likes reading, writing, sight-seeing, travelling and making new friends.

Stanley Gazemba is a novelist, journalist and author of a large number of children's books. His work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The East African*, *Msanii Magazine* and many other publications. His novel *The Stone Hills of Maragoli* was published by Kwani? and in the US as *Forbidden Fruit*. He is based in Nairobi.

Tanzanian writer **Nahida Esmail** is an award-winning author. Mother of two, she's published over 30 books and enjoys hiking and cycling.

Mike Frangos is a lecturer at Linnaeus university in Sweden. He has published widely on literature in English and is particularly interested in African comics.

Godfrey Kariuki is a poet and has a Masters of Art in Literature from the University of Nairobi. He is a co-founder of the Modern African Poetry group on Facebook.

Chala Hailu Abate, aka Caalaa Hayiluu Abaataa is a poet and writer from Oromia-Ethiopia. He has published 2 books of poetry and two other books in Afan Oromo. Some of Caalaa's poems in translation into different languages have been published by the *Svenska Dagbladet* newspaper, Blank Spot, *PROVINS* magazine etc.

Biola Olatunde is a poet, novelist, playwright/producer and blogger based in Akure, Nigeria. She has been writing for the last 40 years, and has written and produced plays for international organizations. Olatunde has been part of poetry anthologies internationally and locally, published several novels and is a member of the Association of Nigerian Authors.

Machiek Akuocpiir Cayier is a South Sudanese Poet, Philosopher, Lyricist & Rapper. He also goes by the pseudonym "Jago Machiek, Jr." His work is available on allpoetry.com under his pseudonym. Machiek pursues a Bachelor of Science in Software Engineering at the International University of East Africa, Kansanga, Kampala Uganda.

Mark Chetambe is a writer, speaker, dramatist and humourist based in Nairobi, Kenya. He is a lecturer at the Department of Literature, Kenyatta University. He has published numerous academic works and books, including works of children's literature.

Young Francis is a young Ghanaian poet and nurse. Literature has been part of his life since he was 7.

