



The
Sex
Anthology

edited by
SIBBYL WHYTE

EROTIC AFRICA: **The SEX Anthology**



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Contents

Editor's Note		v
The Proposition	Bubblinna	1
Self-Portrait As A Building With Rooms	Chibuihe Obi	12
Indulgence	Joyce Nawiri	13
I Want	Kwoh .B. Elonge	19
Pudding	Alvin Kathembe	25
Ife Oma	Bryan Okwesili	33
Anatomy	Michael Larri	35
The New Sex Guide	Eudiah Kamonjo	36
Moonlight	Anthony Madukwe	42
You Handsome Lady Killer	Osinachi	48
Hail Mary	Savannah Mafia	55
Vaginismus	Blessing Nwodo	56
The Morning After	DT Harry	62
The S-word	Ernest Ogunyemi	67
Wouldn't It Be Nice	Erhu Amreyan	72
The Mulokole	Precious .C.K	79
My Father's Widow	Jerry Edo	86
The Hourglass Gallery	Shammah Godoz	93
How Do You Feel	Hussani Abdulrahim	101

Moving	Alithnayn Abdulkareem	102
Last Night In Oba	Kaodilichi Ogamba	110
Touch	Raphael d'Abdon	117
Chocolate Cake	Filemon Iiyambo	119
Notes on Contributors		

Editor's Note

SEX IS EVERYWHERE, and, being energy, it inhabits many forms. In Africa, it is present in our music, our dance and, sometimes, unsavoury aspects of it make the news. However, while we are willing to sing and dance along to sexually explicit songs, we are less likely to talk about our personal notions of sex. This perhaps is because, from childhood, one is conditioned by ill-constructed admonitions to think of sex as a vice rather than a wholesome experience. The awkwardness surrounding sex-education is something most people are conversant with, but it is less strange when one considers that our dialects brim with metaphors and proverbs which usually accompany the discussion of important matters. Our reticence is therefore understandable, but not acceptable when it seeps into our literature.

Traditionally, in much of what constitutes our African literature, there is a marked absence of sexual intercourse in stories filled with adult characters who, without authorial preclusion, would be getting naked and into each other's bodies. This, not because they are libidinous creatures persuaded by raging hormones, but because exploring sex is a route to discovery. While there are African authors and bloggers publishing erotic stories online, the question remains: Why are there not more stories exploring the body and its many pleasures coming out of the African closet? The focus on sex is deliberate, as I believe that to skip past our versions of the erotic in our stories is a disservice to ourselves. The stories in this anthology are not just about sweaty bodies—they are about people like us and it would not be strange to find one's personal sexual experiences sandwiched between the pages.

Always, there is a story behind every sexual encounter, so how two or more people arrive at their entanglement of limbs is decidedly varied. In *Erotic Africa: The Sex Anthology*, no two stories are similar. In “The New Sex Guide,” Eudiah Kamonjo gives us a peek into her real life, one in which she combines poetry, dance and performs sex along with her team to help clients understand the act of giving and receiving pleasure. Jerry Edo serves us the other non-fiction piece in the collection which takes us twenty odd years into his past where he is seduced in “My Father’s Widow”. Raphael d’Abdon’s “Touch” is a trip down memory lane, as each intersection gives up body after body, and nostalgia becomes the perfect masturbatory aid. Chibuihe Obi’s “self-portrait as a building with rooms” takes one through unexpected passageways and ends at a familiar point. A point where one hopes for a fulfilling sexual encounter that both reveals and devours one’s fears.

The fiction swings through the doors of a chapel, clubs, art galleries, hotels, bachelor pads and is seen running away from security guards just like the characters in Anthony Madukwe’s “Moonlight”. Besides well-meant admonition, closely held religious belief or trauma can also stand guard at the gateways of one’s mind, preventing sexual fulfillment as can be seen in Precious C.K.’s “The Mulokole” and Blessing Nwodo’s “Vaginismus.” The brain, they say, is the largest sex organ and Bubbllinna’s “The Proposition” shows us that even without physical contact a sexual experience can occur. We wonder along with Erhu Kome: “Wouldn’t It Be Nice?” if we could have sexual encounters in real life as easily as we did in our imaginations and dreams?

The characters in this collection inexorably move towards junctions of pleasure, away from old places and places of pain as can be seen in Kaodilichi Ogamba’s “Last Night in Oba” and Alithnayn Abdulkareem’s “Moving.” In a time where the Internet readily provides options of possible partners, Kwoh Elonge’s unhappily married character searches online for the perfect lover and finds him in “I Want”. In Alvin Kathembe’s “Pudding,” we find that the proof of a bad or good sexual encounter may begin with the eating, but more than that, it shows us that every sexual encounter can

be a learning experience. Filemon Iiyambo's "Chocolate Cake" is the dessert of this collection with a story so sweet it leaves one wanting more.

There are people without whom I might have stopped midway. To Ainehi and Otosirieze, for always creating portals through *Brittle Paper*. To the writers who gifted their words and made this be. To Samuel, Inikpi, Frances, Anthony, Nonso, Debbie, Su'eddie, Shammah, and others who made the process easier. To Andrew, for the late nights spent sipping cold water and splitting stories. To Prince Jacon Osinachi for the cover art worth a thousand words. To those who said little yet meant well. Thank you!

The 23 works here are proof that sex is not such a taboo subject and can be dwelt upon in writing by Africans. I enjoyed working on this anthology and sincerely hope it proves pleasurable for you, too, as you journey through these tales of black bodies speaking the language of sex.

Sibbyl Akwaugo Whyte

The Proposition

Bubblinna

“PLEASE SIR, check again. He said he sent it since ten o’clock.”

I hear perfection and every other sound fades. The voice is a vortex of pleasure, like fingernails raking my ass in coition. I shudder and turn to find its source. She leans against the counter, trying to catch a glimpse of the cashier’s monitor. Maxi gown, hair in kinky twists, her face is streaked with acne and tears. The cashier, unsuccessful in hiding his irritation, motions her to move aside and glances at his watch. I look at mine; it is a quarter to four, the official closing time. As I ascend the stairs, I spare a backward glance and tell myself I will approach her after my transactions. Twenty-seven minutes later, she is gone and I feel an unsettling sense of loss. For a moment, I close my eyes and try to recapture the essence of her voice, but like dew on petals, it has disappeared. Wondering what I could have done differently, I exit the bank. The voice hits me again as my car pings open, and I turn to find her leaning against a bus, hands rising and falling with the cadence of her conversation. When she disconnects the call and begins to sob, I venture forward and tap her.

She jumps, swiping the snot off her nose. “Yes?”

Laced with tears, her voice still leaves a frisson of excitement beneath my collar. I wonder what she would make of my craving for the sounds falling from her lips. “I saw you in the bank and now, here. What is the problem?”

She draws a breath and exhales, summing me up. “My twin sister is in the hospital. Someone promised to help, but he disappointed us.”

“Twin? Does she sound like you?” I blurt.

Her glance is a strobe of anger and I wither in its glare.

“How much do you need?”

“70,000,” she finally says.

“Come,” I say, gesturing towards my car.

A brief delay laden with questions streaked across her face, but she follows. There are bundles of cash in the glove compartment. I take out one and hand it to her. She stares at the money, then back at me as I read the emotions flickering in them—fear, desperation, shock, relief. She reaches out hesitantly. What follows is my business card. “Call me if you need anything else.”

TWO DAYS later, her gratitude pours forth. Light and steady, her voice is a caress directing the flow of pleasure within me, till it coalesces in my groin. I exhale and interrupt her. “I have a proposition for you, Lillian.”

I tell her.

Voice thinned out with incredulity, she asks, “You mean, all you want me to do is read for you? No strings attached and you would still pay me?”

“Yes.”

“Let’s say I agree, how much will I be earning?”

“I will pay you ₦1,000 per page, if you agree to be naked while you read to me.”

“Huh?”

I wonder if I have gone too far and quickly add, “I don’t want to fuck you.”

Silence buzzes in my ears and just when I am about to apologise and call it off, she clears her throat and my heart beats against my ears.

“Sir, please can I at least wear my underwear till I get comfortable?”

“Of course,” I say. Not quite certain, I ask, “Are you sure you want to do this? You can think about it some more.”

She laughs for the first time, relief dancing in her throat. “I have. When do we start?”

STANDING ON the table, Lillian is naked except for a pair of black, thigh-high stockings. My gaze drifts over her small breasts, her slightly paunchy stomach with its

appendectomy scar and her utterly magnificent thighs. My cock twitches in acknowledgement.

“I missed your birthday last week,” she says. “But I still brought cake.”

“That’s so sweet of you.”

I glance at the cake and return to the shaven mound of her crotch. Over the months, in the course of our arrangement, we have gone from reading in underwear, to without—till she started surprising me with sexy lingerie and props that served to further tantalize. She climbs off the table and I get a glimpse of her brown-lipped pussy. She turns around and leans across for a saucer, and I imagine holding her down to the burnished wood while thrusting into her.

“Go to your position,” she says after we have shared a few slices of cake.

I quickly obey and sit with my chair backed against the door. “What book are we reading today?”

“That’s another surprise. Today, you will do as I say, agreed?”

I nod.

“Speak up!” Her voice takes on an authoritarian undertone and my cock pulsates with the thought of things to come.

“Yes.”

“Now pick a letter from A to D.”

I chuckle. Her celebration of my 48th birthday is proving to be more interesting.

“C.”

“Good. Recently I discovered this site for erotic short stories, so I picked four. C is for the one titled ‘Red Thong.’” At this, her gaze slides down the length of me. “Stand up and get undressed.”

My cock flares. I stammer, “What?”

“Take off your clothes. Or don’t you want to?”

Trembling with excitement, I rid myself of the clothes. For a man approaching fifty, I am in good shape but my hands pause at the waistband of my boxers. I wonder if she will look at me. She does, her gaze skimming dismissively over me and returning to her book. “Take that off too and sit down.”

Something about her nonchalance and the way she is talking to me is arousing. I slip the boxers off to reveal my cock now stretched taut with anticipation. Putting away the clothes, I sit and begin stroking my cock but her gaze stops me.

“Drop your hand to the sides of the chair, please. You are not to touch yourself unless I say so. Agreed?”

My hands drop, pleasure curls within me. “Yes.”

“Good. Now spread your legs.”

Heart banging in my chest, I spread my legs apart and watch her gaze on my quivering cock. I imagine her kneeling before me and taking it into her glossy lips and a tremor streaks through me.

She crosses her legs and begins to read.

I close my eyes and her voice flows and drags me under. The story is about a woman who catches her husband stealing and sniffing the panties of his female neighbour. I realize then that I have never consciously sniffed a woman's underwear before. Does it smell like their sex or differently? Perhaps I should ask Lillian for hers. The slap of her hand on the table retrieves my attention and I find Lillian staring at me, unsmiling.

“You were not paying attention, were you?”

Could I tell her what had occupied my mind?

She crooks her forefinger at me. I stand and she shakes her head. “Crawl to me. On your hands and knees.”

Stunned, I stare at her. Today, there is something different about her, and for a second I wonder if she has swapped with her twin, but the voice remains unchanged—smooth as a pebble rubbing against my thigh. I could call off this arrangement, but who am I kidding? I want whatever comes.

“Seriously, Henry. Get on your knees,” she says and resumes reading in a voice too low for me to hear unless I draw near.

I comply. The rug scrapes my knees and my cock slaps against my stomach while my balls hang heavy with impending release.

“Look at me, Henry,” Lillian says. “I can tie your belt around your neck and lead you like a dog. People say most men are dogs, don’t they?”

There is a tint of terror to the image but it fascinates me and when I look at her, she winks. “You would like that, wouldn’t you?” I am close enough to hear her, but she beckons me further with that crooked finger till I can almost kiss her knees. “That’s a good doggy,” she adds, running her hand over my head. A low growl vibrates in my throat, shocking me and causing her to chuckle. *Christ! What is happening to me?*

As she resumes reading, I watch her nipples come alive as darkened points on her chest. In the story, the wife is infuriated when her husband says he is not aroused by her practical, full coverage panties. In her anger, she shoves him onto the bed and straddles his face. Lillian always gives life to the characters and, right now, I feel the woman’s anger as though her insults are directed at me. Lillian’s thighs slowly come apart and the result is an intense sensory overload. My breathing grows ragged as her voice trickles onto my back like drops of honey, while the familiar smell of leather and woman wafts outwards, beckoning on me to peer at her thick vagina lips glistening with her wetness. Imagining she is straddling my face, too, I am aroused beyond belief. I inhale and shudder and attempt to listen to the story even though I just want to sink my cock inside her. As the woman rides her husband’s face, she gradually moves from anger to arousal and I wonder how come Lillian’s voice hasn’t faltered for once. When the man

yanks his wife's panties to the side and drives his tongue into her, Lillian finally moans and scoots forward. *Christ! It is happening.* My cock concurs vigorously.

"Do you want to lick me?" Lillian asks, propping one silk-covered leg on my shoulder.

Ever since I got married, cunnilingus is something I have refused to share with other women I fuck. Now I nod eagerly like a dog, cock twitching.

Lillian laughs and spreads her legs further, slipping a finger, then two into her sex. From this point I watch them slide in and out, coated with her juices. I inhale, and the scent of her is overpowering. She shudders and it runs through me. I wish she would let me lap at the juices trickling down the cleft of her ass and onto the couch. I close my eyes and my tongue reaches out gingerly to lick my lips. I imagine her hands on my head, pushing me further in to taste her tangy sweetness, tongue running over all her crevices. A deep groan slips from my throat. "Open your eyes!"

"Please, Lillian, can I touch my cock now?" I counter. "It is so hard and painful."

She chuckles and peers down at my throbbing cock, veins vivid on it like markings on a map. "You want to cum eh?"

"Yes. Please."

"You would like me to stroke it, right? Want me to flick my tongue against the head, lick off your pre-cum. And maybe slide it into my mouth and suck and suck till you are fucking my face, abi?"

“Fuuuuucck!” The groan slips out as the ache in my groin deepens to a migraine.

She laughs and resumes reading, her legs propped open inches before my face.

I am controlling a baser instinct that insists I can get off my knees, sink my cock inside her and pump her full with my seed. She has control because I handed it over to her. I won't touch myself or her till she allows it. I bite on the inside of my cheek and try to shut my senses down to weaken my erection. I fail because her voice insinuates as breeze, gently fanning all my sensitive spots till I am left shivering with sheer need. My hands pressed against the floor are quaking, balls full to bursting, as my cock strains and strains, seeking touch.

“Please, Lillian. Let me just touch myself once, please. It hurts now.” I can't believe I am groveling for relief but something about hearing myself plead arouses me further. “Please, Lillian. Please.”

She puts aside the tablet. “This is how it will go. If I say yes, one touch will not be enough. You will want to stroke and stroke till you cum. Am I lying?”

My head droops between my shoulders. She is right. Once skin meets skin, I am not letting go till I come. “My back hurts, can I go back to my position?” I want to be further away from the musky scent of her.

She cocks her head to the side, considers the requests and nods. As I make to stand, she places a palm on my back and I jump at the contact, nerves frazzled by arousal. She leans forward and says, “Crawl back, Henry. I want to see your back view.”

Something catches in my throat. Meekly, I turn and put one knee forward and that is when the slap lands on my butt which clenches at the contact. I gasp and my cock throbs with unrelenting vigor as a familiar storm gathers in my lower abdomen. I look between my knees to see a viscous trail of pre-cum dripping from my cock, onto the rug. Having never been this aroused without immediate relief, I wonder if there is a health implication and make a mental note to Google it. It is difficult to rise off the ground. My legs are trembling so hard but I haul myself onto the seat and collapse against it, dizzy with the rush of arousal and pain. Lillian's voice breaks in, "Henry, do as before. Hands by your sides, legs spread apart."

With each move, my stomach quivers like there is a small-scale storm gathering within.

"Look at me."

I force my eyes open and let them fall on her. She continues reading and, like a siren, her voice forces me to listen. The man has gotten control of the situation and has now flipped his wife onto her back. He slams into her furiously, saying nothing. I imagine I am he, thrusting into that warm wetness. When she clutches his ass to press him further in, I can feel her sweaty hands on mine. My hips jerk to meet hers. When she finally arcs off the bed calling the name of her god, it is me who slams in harder, scrambling to the climax. When the man finally orgasms, it is my semen that fills her.

"Woooooow! Henry!" I hear the familiar voice but it seems to come from far away. "How did you come without touching yourself?"

I open my eyes to find Lillian squatting beside me, and my gaze drifts downwards to my cock which is jerking and spurting semen onto my thighs. I raise a hand to touch it, but she slaps it down and says, "Wait till I leave."

I watch her dress up, cock throbbing, balls still filled with longing. At the door, she says, "Try not to yank it off, Henry. Call me when you need me?"

I nod.

"Speak up!"

"Yes. I will."

The door closes on her laughter and I hold onto that sound as I peak and crash, again and again.

Self-Portrait as a Building with Rooms

Chibuike Obi

i knew nothing of the rooms in my body until a man entered me that night
 under the warm light of the milk-moon
 my first bird-song escaped underneath his naked body his thrust a rhythmic groan
 of a hammer landing
 his cock excited and sure inside me like a language only thirst could mould
 twice i let him plant that cock back into my mouth like a fruit tree full of
 warm nourishment
 twice i let his musk wrap me like a flowered shirt like clouds like water
 each room stretched wide by desire each room a small country flooded
 with cum

//

in the beginning when god picked me up from the sand-bed of a beach he
 called me temple
 a clay box with rooms he blessed me with a hole called me whole
 a vessel to be filled
 he taught me how to find between the hanging gardens of a man's body my
 way back to eden
 he said kiss and be kissed be screwed fucked loose like a theory
 a door

//

once i in a room made thick with mist i kissed the fat cock of a man to
 taste god's promises again
 i let him ride me like an ass into that jerusalem of lust cum running down my
 thighs
 i need to find my lost body
 in the beginning i'm naked on a man's rugged hands his tongue
 in my ears
 my body hard and moist like a juicy fruit waiting to be eaten whole

Indulgence

Joyce Nwiri

“BLESS ME Father for I have sinned. It has been eleven years since my last confession.”

That was the first day I approached him. I just wanted to hear his voice rumble for its tone possessed a certain warmth, like a blanket wrapped around my shoulders on a cold day and it bore words that cleansed everything stained in my soul. As I left the chapel, I heard his footsteps behind me and lengthened my stride because I could not bring myself to see him so soon after my confession. I had poured out stories of the lust that built steadily in my body and led me to commit adultery again and again in my mind. Told of how these dirty thoughts of fucking random men caused me to touch myself every day and night till I came.

“Ma’am, please wait!”

I halted for a few seconds before I started running. Even though he stopped following me, I could still feel his eyes on me. I clutched the leso wrapped around my arms and shivered. As I hurried home, I carried with me this unsettling feeling that I had stirred trouble.

Two months ago, my husband and I arrived Sikujua, a small town in the heart of Voi. Father Silas had paid a visit to our humble abode to welcome and invited us to mass,

but Chumbolo, being a Pentecostal, turned down the invitation. The next day he readily accepted the request of Pastor Mutua of the Jesus Celebration Centre Church.

EARLIER THIS evening, I left the house when my husband was asleep. At first I took a sedate walk up the dusty road leading to Mwakingali. Of late I had come to treasure the solitude that Mwakingali woodlands offered. However, today, I walked at an unusually slow pace as if my feet were struggling with the ground. With each stride, my thoughts wandered backwards to my childhood when I used to fashion dolls out of rags under the intense sun and took delight in getting the sand between my toes as I walked along the Likoni Shelly beach in Mombasa, unaware of the life that awaited me. I had read Milly Kirihamiti's novel, *My life with a Criminal*, as a teen and always wished for a love story like that of Milly and John.

I didn't get a John, I got Chumbolo. Our parents were friends and even though Chumbolo and I were not familiar with each other, we both agreed to honour our parents' wishes and got married. My mum told me the best husband was the one who showed great respect for his parents, could provide for his family and was a born-again Christian. Yet here I was today, walking by myself to unburden the sadness and loneliness that sat heavy in me. Someone should have told me that marriage was a prison filled with truncated desires. I was deeply lost in the jungle of my thoughts and did not realize when I made a turn and began walking in a different direction. It was only when I bumped into Father Silas near St. Dominic that I realized I had walked far.

“Ma’am, are you okay?”

There was his voice again, its baritone reverberating through my body, constructing words with a distinct Luo accent. I stood rooted to the ground and held his questioning gaze without uttering a word. Then he took my hand and led me into the chapel to talk. His words were salve to me and I broke down. When I was done, he held the left side of my face and swiped away the tears with his thumb. I could feel his ragged breath but I couldn’t tell whether it was one of sympathy or due to the proximity of our bodies. I wanted to lie on his slightly heaving chest for comfort but I also wanted to kiss his lips for a different type of comfort. In my moment of dilemma he did nothing, so I stood up to leave, but he held me back and engaged my lips in a long deep kiss with an intensity I had never tasted before. His kiss occupied my entire world like water filling a room and I arched my body, holding onto him in the way a person clutches onto anything when sinking in quicksand. After a while, we both pulled away and stared at each other in grave silence, realization dawning. I could not bring myself to look at him.

“Are you okay?” he asked, concern engraved in his voice.

I turned to look at him but was fixated by his lips so I kissed them in a way that betrayed my desire for him. He pulled away again and went to lock the door. When he returned, he took off his priestly robes and sat down before pulling me onto his laps.

“Are you comfortable?” he asked.

I nodded.

Circling his left arm around my waist he pulled down my head for a kiss with his right hand. He pulled away again and asked, "Why did you run away from me that day?"

"I was avoiding this."

His hands reached for the zipper on my blouse and sliding it down, he plastered kisses on my neck. I moaned as he unhooked my bra and my breasts sprang free. His warm hands held them tenderly as his gaze interlocked with mine. When he began to fondle me, I looked down, admiring the mastery of his hands. As his head journeyed downwards, I watched as he held my breast firmly the way he held the chalice of wine during mass, and then he suckled me. I moaned softly, the touch of his lips almost melting my mind. His hands dropped to my waist and I arched my back once more. He pulled me closer to him and lightly traced my nipples with his tongue before taking them whole in his mouth the way one licked ice-cream off a strawberry before taking a bite. His lips left a trail of ecstasy in their wake and I moaned some more, this time a bit louder, losing my cautiousness. He lifted me up and made me sit facing away from him, back pressed to his chest.

For a minute I pressed my fleshy thighs firmly together as I could not help but feel like I was jumping into a sea on fire, but on second thoughts, I wanted to burn with his fingertips. I wanted to keep burning till he filled me. He slowly caressed my thighs and his hand journeyed upwards till his fingers found a resting place for their magic. For three years I had been married, but my husband would not recognize my pussy in a line-up. His dick was the only contact he made with my body, and that wasn't very often.

Father Silas slid two fingers inside of me and, after a few seconds, I began to grind against them and even found myself spreading my thighs further apart for him. My hips found the luxury of balance in his hands. Although I quivered and moaned, he didn't break rhythm. He knew the exact rubbing pressure to exert against my clitoris; a little fast but not too much to prevent me from climaxing.

"Put me on the bench," I pleaded, and he did, only not the way I intended. He made me kneel on the bench with my feet hanging off in such a way that my buttocks stuck out to his groin. Holding my skirt up to my waist, I heard his belt unbuckle. I bent lower, yearning for him to quench the thirst he had awakened. As he pinned himself closer, I felt his cock nudging at my entrance. I exhaled and my body opened to receive him. At first, he was slow but once fully inside, his thrusts were so powerfully vicious that I froze almost immediately at its strength. As I relaxed, he began to plough me, faster and deeper. I could feel every hardened bit of him as he continued to wreck me, surprising me with the flexibility of his waist. Our moans and groans filled the chapel.

With each thrust, I could feel his power. Sweat dripped off us. My vagina flooded. This man was working me the way a blacksmith handled hot iron. Suddenly he whispered, "Our acts scream hell."

"But what we are making here is heaven."

He pulled out and then asked me to ride him. As I tried to straddle him, he reminded me that we had taken a risk.

"I risked everything the first day I desired you but at this moment, I want every

inch of your cock buried inside of me,” I replied. “I want to rock myself on your cock until every star goes dark in the sky, until every inch of my flesh trembles to exhaustion.”

He kissed me as he held my waist and helped me settle onto his cock and, in that unholy ride, we burned in each other’s passion. At this point we were fucking like we were madness. Each ride blended into the next, intensifying the heat consuming our bodies and souls until waves of climax crashed through us.

Forty minutes later, as I walked home I kept thinking of how this path ahead of me was alive with trouble. I was so lost in my new found happiness that I did not see my husband standing in front of me.

“Where have you been?” Chumbolo barked.

I froze. In that moment, all I could hear was my heartbeat in my own ears.

I Want

Kwob .B. Elonge

HE LOOKED like what I imagined my lover would be. Tall, slender and dark, with a well-kept moustache and piercing brown eyes. Thick lips and a broad nose fitted ruggedly on his face gave him a charming austerity. He was not a stereotype of beautiful men, and I really did not know much about him but for a close-up he sent with a bearded face and eyes that seared into me. He seemed shrouded in mystery, the type of man who did not talk much. And since I had to deal with one whose idea of talk was entirely about him, his work and excuses for his lack of attention to my desires, I felt elated and relieved.

This one did not act like all the others online. He never asked to see my picture. He said he was curious about meeting me because he liked the headless torso I had uploaded as my profile picture on Badoo. I finally sent him my picture two days ago, after he sent a picture of him playing basketball. He said he was 27. Just five years younger. Good enough to be mature. He acted a bit older and seemed discreet. He was not excited to send an unsolicited dick pic to get reviews of his manhood. I had deleted dozens already; one from a 22-year-old calling himself Big Wakanda D. He was too excited, one-night stand-ish, and lacked sufficient brain function. I blocked him. Then there was Pussy Wrecker, who sent a bulging penis straining tight, blue boxers, with a flabby

tummy above. That was the turn off. Simple Guy, No Complications insisted on seeing my pictures or get off his chat line and buy some courage.

So when I wrote to Rollercoaster, I wasn't quite hopeful. That was two weeks ago and we now spent almost five hours a day just chatting, about many things but mostly me and my work. He let me talk, asking simple but important questions. The ones I had hoped Wilson, my husband, would ask. What I had eaten, how work was going, and what music I was listening to. We both loved *Daphne*. I told him about the masters programme I was taking in Management. When I complained about my boss piling work on me, he asked how I managed it all, work and school. The type of things Wilson was so clueless to bother with. However, I did not tell him about my boring marriage or my desire to have kids. I had read the ten rules of getting a man online from a blog. Number 4 said "Don't bring the baby talk!" It made sense to me that nobody online was looking to have a baby. Well, I was, but not immediately. I needed something much more urgent; human touch.

After nine months of what looked like imposed chastity by Wilson, I felt like my body was covered with a layer of concrete, begging to be cracked open. There were the many nights which I waited for Wilson to return home, excited that my cooking would motivate him. I wore sexy, silky night gowns, exposing legs and cleavages smoothed with the sheen of oils. Yet I ended up writhing on my bed all night wanting a man, while the one I was avowed to dozed off like a knocked engine.

FOUR WEEKS ago, I Googled “how to overcome sexual desire.” An avalanche of search results sprang onto my phone screen. Many advised that I steer clear of triggers. That would not work, I thought. Almost every man had become a trigger. Then I stumbled on a blog called *Sisters Love*. The counsel was simple and persuasive. It cautioned: sexual desire was not to be suppressed, as that would only result in depression. I was already witnessing the early signs of depression with persistent mood swings and impatience. *Sisters Love* advised that I seek out someone. Try online dating, it advised. Gingerly, I took the leap, working out a plan to make sure Wilson or anyone who knows us could not get to know or see me. If Wilson ever found out, it would delegitimize all my issues with his distant attitude. He said it was work. Though now he was always glued to his phone, chatting with a person that made him giggle like a teenage girl in love. I needed to be discreet. My Google Playstore took me to Badoo, one of the numerous online dating sites on its database. I feared putting my picture in case someone recognized me and talked to Wilson or his sister Therese. I began my double life with the picture of a headless torso, and stumbled across Rollercoaster. I asked for his picture and he sent a close-up: a decent-looking man, full of a raw manliness that spelt mystery and danger. Yes, I needed danger. I had asked him what he would do to me when we meet, an attempt at being bold. He replied, “Whatever you want.” Three words infused with certainty, confidence, and assurance of his ability. I needed a taste.

ROLLERCOASTER SUGGESTED Muluh Guest House for our first meeting. I had never heard of it but as I approached its green-painted metal gate, it seemed perfect for a

discreet affair. It was a two-storey mansion, stranded at the end of Buea, neighboured only by the towering mountain. Silent like a monk in meditation, it sprawled through a vast expanse of open field. Reflections danced across the trees, while birds waded gracefully through the shallows. He had given his number this morning and we had agreed to be here by 4 p.m. Not wanting to deal with any nosy receptionist, I dialled his number. That was the first time I heard his voice; deep and restrained, commanding and soothing at the same time. It made me want to hear more.

“Just come right in. I can see you,” he said. As I approached the open door, my heart pounded against my chest with anticipation, excitement and nervousness scrambling for domination.

At the far corner, a bearded young man in a fitting polo T-shirt and blue jeans stood waving at me with a disarming smile. There was no mistake; he was what I imagined my lover would be. With a nervous smile plastered on, I sashayed towards him; a walk I had rehearsed in my head, somewhere between sexy and poised. I extended a wrist; he held it, then leaned forward and plastered a peck on my cheek, his rough beard ticklish against my jaw. He pulled my chair and watched me sit while he scanned me, eyes lingering long enough to communicate desire. I felt seen. My teal cleavage-baring gown was doing its magic but I felt something more. I felt like he could see beyond my makeup and the feigned courage.

“You said you like ekwang, so I ordered it already. I hope that’s not presumptuous?”

I nodded foolishly in appreciation, not knowing how to feel about the fact that he remembered that simple detail.

“So where were we?” he asked with a twinkle in his eyes.

Time passed like the wind, fast and comforting. We talked and giggled. Never once did he take his eyes off me. I felt like I had known him forever, like I should have known him a long time ago. Life would have been better, much simpler. As I climbed up the stairs and he opened the bedroom door, I thought of all the mistakes I could make and have made and yet this seemed so right. It seemed right when he held both hands and then squeezed me into his warm embrace. It seemed perfectly right when he planted a tender kiss on my mouth, his mouth tasting like purified vanilla, his body airing a calm, earthy smell. I savoured his tongue, the thickness of his luscious lips, and his fingers rubbing my erect nipples. This was all mine. I slid my hands over his chest, all the way down to unbuckle his belt and drifting gently down into his boxers to feel his heat and his stiffened manhood. The air between us grew thin, pulled by the heated movement of lips and hands. He unclasped my bra, a red lacy one I had bought to entice Wilson. I let it fall to the ground and then I moved away, smiling shyly at him as I slowly stripped off my pant and let him take in the sight.

He looked bedazzled as he drew closer, hands sliding down my buttocks and pressing firmly, enough to make me feel wetness below. Then he laid me gently on the bed, sheets smelling of cinnamon and a tint of lemon. He moved backwards and pulled off his boxers. His manhood curved firmly to the left, pulsating with want and

excitement. Every bone in me relaxed, as he dipped below, spreading my legs and planting his tongue, and licking, and digging, while I rattled, eyes closed, splintered with excitement and longing, begging for him to go on, *deeper!*

The world shrunk into a single room with just our bodies and the dim evening moonlight sneaking in through the worn tint of the louvres. I gasped as his shaft pierced into me, thrusting forward, while he nibbled at my nipples with his tongue, his big, strong hand clasped over mine. His body, a mass of pleasure moving rhythmically on me, in me, through me. Everything disappeared into the moment. I came and could not remember the hell of my life; the struggles of work, the pain of childlessness, the guilt of adultery. All I did was feel and live in the moment, wishing it would not end.

“Anthony. That’s my name,” he whispered, before filling me, and I knew. I knew I would never forget him.

Pudding

Alvin Kathembe

HER FIRST client of the day came up for a breath of air.

“Like I always say,” he declared, gasping, “the proof of the pussy is in the eating.”

That made Maria chuckle. She’d never had any doubts about the proof, but the eating itself was suspect. He had been skirting around the issue for the last twenty minutes. For the first ten or so she’d been pleasantly surprised, thinking that he was teasing her, bringing her to the precipice of the mountain, showing her all the lands that lay beyond it, then pulling up just at the last moment, trying to make her beg for it.

But that was ten minutes ago, and since then she had been staring at the ceiling, transitioning from excitement to disappointment, to disinterested boredom. Sure, he knew the theory of what he was trying to accomplish (surely he had watched it done before, in the dark of his room, on an incognito tab) but he lacked the application. A more perceptive lover would have inferred from her silence and squirming – alas, teeth – that his technique was maybe not working so well. She suspected that he was more interested with the idea, the image of giving pleasure to a woman, than the act itself. Then again, that is what she did for a living – she sold illusions.

He dived back in for a few more awkward minutes. Then, thankfully, he pulled up, rolled off the bed and reached into the pocket of his pants, draped on the chair by the bed. He pulled out the condoms, winking and making faces at her, then rolled one on.

“Are you ready?” he asked.

It was over quickly. He was on his back, panting and wheezing like he’d just run a marathon. She laughed at him, rolled over to her bag and got out a pack of cigarettes.

“This isn’t a smoking room,” he gasped at her.

“It is now.” She leaned over and blew a puff into his face, then kissed him on his startled lips. He held up his hands in mock surrender, shaking his head.

This was their third “appointment.” Kevin was in his early thirties; tall, dark and kind of handsome. He was attractive in that cocky, loud, Luo way. He was smart and funny, sometimes unintentionally so. He liked to take her on dates to fancy restaurants, picking her up in his big, fancy car, ordering expensive wines and buying her lavish gifts. Whenever he called the escort service, he asked specifically for her. He talked big and dropped names, keen to show that he was Somebody. He always paid cash.

“Look at this monster,” he said, cupping his half-flaccid penis. “Is it one of the biggest you’ve ever seen?”

Maria snorted. She knew just how to play men like him.

“It’s decent,” she said, taking a deep pull of her cigarette, the nicotine a cloud of relief to her brain.

He smirked, fondling his member. He gave it a little shake, and it flopped about a bit, and then lay, big, black, and coiled, the length of the blood sausage Kenyans call mutura.

“It’s a bit better than that,” he said smugly.

“Y’know, Gandalf had that big old stick,” Maria teased, “and he couldn’t really do too much with it. The Elder Wand, on the other hand, was an itty bit in comparison.”

She rolled over and straddled him, enjoying the look of bewilderment on his face.

“It’s not the size of the magic wand that matters, baby,” she whispered in his ear, “but the amount of magic in the wand.”

He gave a shout of laughter and pushed her off. She tumbled over, laughing too.

“That was a good one!” she said.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever.” He reached for a cigarette, “Give me one of those.”

“But it’s not a smoking room,” she mocked, passing them to him.

They sat there in the semi-darkness, smoking in silence.

He asked, “How many times did you cum?”

“What, just now?” she asked, surprised at the question.

“Yes.”

She stayed silent, unsure of what to say.

“What?” he asked, his voice earnest now. “Not even when I was giving you head?”

She almost laughed out loud, but caught herself. He was serious.

“Look, Kevin,” she said slowly, “you don’t pay to get me off, it’s the other way round.”

“Yes,” he insisted, “but still...not once?”

She remained silent.

“What about the other times?”

Silence.

“Not ever?”

Silence.

“Well, I suppose that for you it’s not about the pleasure,” he said, his expression clearing up, rationalizing it to himself. “It’s work.”

Maria frowned.

“I actually enjoy what I do,” she said. “I have clients who have never – would never – touch me. Sex...that’s not what they pay for. That’s not what *you* pay for.”

He mulled that over for a little bit.

“What do I pay for, then?”

She smirked, and reached for the ashtray across him, stubbing out her cigarette.

“Why, my killer jokes, and my winning personality, of course.”

He laughed.

“God, you are such a mindfuck!” he said. Then he looked at her with a strange glint in his eye, a strange hunger that she’d never seen before.

She sat up startled, waiting.

“I want to see.”

“You want to see what?” she breathed.

“I want to see you climax.”

She blushed in spite of herself, and cursed herself instantly. She looked away, and began to get up. “I have to go.”

“Wait,” Kevin said, taking her hand. He pulled her to his chest and added, “I’ll pay double.”

She looked at him, skeptical. “Double?”

“Double. But just to watch,” he said.

She thought about it for four seconds. “Okay.”

Kevin jumped up and off the bed. He took the leather swivel chair from behind the desk and rolled it around till it was facing the bed, and then he sat and leaned back, hands cupped behind his head, grinning at her. Maria couldn't help but laugh.

IT WAS hard to get going, with him sitting there, watching. She lay back and tried to relax, to let her thoughts wander. And slowly, tentatively, she began to touch herself. She ran her fingers through her hair, slowly, sensually, letting her braids run through her fingers like sand. Then with her left hand, she trailed a finger down her cheek, to her mouth, tracing the edges of her lips. Then she parted her mouth slightly and lightly bit on it. Kevin gasped, almost throwing her off, but she could feel the stirring deep inside her now, and she ignored him.

Her hand snaked down her neck in a gentle, light caress. Then she slid down her right hand and cupped her breast and squeezed it, hard; once, twice, three times. She could feel the twitching begin – weak at first, around her clit. Her left hand slid back up to her neck, gripping firmly, almost painfully, as her right hand continued down towards the twitching; down over her belly, through the warm, throbbing wetland and down, toward the centre of the cauldron that was beginning to boil between her legs. She passed over it and ran her hand around the inside of her thigh, gasping, moaning, almost in pain yet trembling with anticipation.

The images flashed through her head, a motley of memories and fantasies feeding her frenzy like fuel in a furnace: that man she'd picked up in Cape Town – would she

ever forget him? Tall, bold, and proud, with thick dreadlocks hanging down to his thick, powerful shoulders; water dripping off his lean body as he stepped out of the shower; veins streaking down his arms like black lightning; his erection high and hungry, sniffing the air like Umslopogaas' axe....

...and that Indian girl – those eyes! She'd been making eyes at her all evening at that party in Mumbai, killing her softly. Then they had danced, two bodies writhing, flickering under the disco lights; and when they kissed she tasted like lust and danger and Jagerbomb. And later, in her room, she lay naked on the bed, her jet-black hair splashed all over the white sheets and her other lips tasted like hunger, like thirst, like the ocean.

She couldn't take it anymore. She took her left hand down and began to rub around her clit; fast and furious, splashing and squeaky. Each pass sent an electric jolt pulsing through her whole body, and she had to stop every few seconds from the sheer muchness of it, until finally, her fingers took a life of their own. Then the room and all the images disappeared, and the fire and twitching grew and grew, till it devoured her body, her mind, the whole world – her own little apocalypse, everything consumed in a furious ecstasy of light and colour and fire.

Then everything began bleeding slowly back into existence, as the fire passed through and out of her body, of which she was aware again – a trembling, twitching, moaning thing lying in a puddle. She lifted her head, and there was Kevin, staring at her wide-eyed and wide mouthed, sitting in a mess of his own. She jumped up and ran to the bathroom. She ran the tap and splashed cold water on her face. What the fuck was that?

She hadn't come that hard in, well, ever. Was it because she'd known someone was watching? There was a point in there when she hadn't known anything at all.

When she stepped back into the room, Kevin had just finished counting off a wad of notes.

"That was...quite something," he said.

"Yes."

He looked at her for a long moment, like he was trying to say something but thought better of it. "Here," he said finally, holding out the money.

She took the notes with a smile and lay on her stomach on the wet bed, legs crossed high up behind her and began to count.

"You know, that was...kind of cool," Kevin said, awkwardly, as he watched. "I want to do this again."

Maria paused, looked up at him for a bit, then smiled and continued counting the crisp, thousand-shilling notes. She got to the figure they'd agreed upon and saw that there was still a healthy bunch of notes in her fist. Oh shit, she thought to herself, I think I'm going to come again.

Ife Oma

Bryan Okwesili

ECSTASY. YOU do not know what it means, how it feels, until he slips his fingers in the valley between your legs. His stubby fingers are rough against your clit. They move in a circular motion, making you jerk, making you moan. He swallows your moans because your lips are enclosed in his. “Passionate kiss,” he calls it. You do not disagree because you cannot tell if passion is the name for the fire burning inside you, making it almost impossible for you to breathe, to think. You trace his spine with your fingers and pull at his hair. Your lips are free now because he is gently biting at your neck. Your moans are loud. Later he would tease you, mimicking the sounds you make during sex, and you would chase him down the stairs with a pillow and both of you would hug in the kitchen and kiss, and begin another round. On the gas cooker.

But now, you can feel him growing down there, hard and huge. You always like it huge. He slips a finger into you. You moan. He chuckles and you know it is because you are wet. You are prepared to take him inside you. He whispers, *Relax*, and you feel the warm sensation of his breath against your ear, and your heart double dips. He moves in; gently, slowly, completely. You gasp. He feels too big yet fits so well. He cups your breasts in his hands and squeezes. It is a gentle squeeze. You wish he would squeeze a little harder, enough to make you feel that your breasts are large, that they fit perfectly

well in his large hands.

His thrust is gentle at first, then rhythmic, then faster and faster. You gasp from each thrust, moisture drying up in your mouth. Outside, it is raining but your eyes are shut, and you can feel the sun because you are steaming up from the inside. He leans forward to kiss you. His lips are salty. You think they taste better now. You wrap your arms around him, then your legs. You now look like a Venus fly trap.

You want him to go deeper and deeper, to feel something you have always felt with him yet can't understand, will never understand. You caress his tensed muscles, all smooth and finely chiselled. The hairs on his chest rub against your nipples and they harden like peas. You open your eyes, the sun remains, and a shiver runs down your spine. You tighten your arms and legs around him.

"Ifeoma," he moans in your ear, whispering your name in full. Your name means *good thing*. You are glad he feels you are good to him. You do not call his. You do not know the meaning of Segun, perhaps you will ask him later. You can feel something building up inside him, the way he trembles now. You can feel it building up inside you too. You jerk and he jerks, and you both climax. You feel him go limp inside you, you feel the room grow cooler and cooler. You feel the sweat on his back dry up, and all together it's just too much feelings. You smile, thinking, this is how ecstasy feels.

Anatomy

Michael Larri

after a while your lips become a canvas,
 purple for days your conscience mourns,
 tells you how unclean you must be,
 and red for days the one you like comes.

he explores you
 like language dipped in spice
 he makes you desire water
 a baptism
 forgiveness . . .
 he dips himself in you
 and comes out with poetry &
 a tongue wet with blasphemy.

after a while your body
 becomes a city ravaged
 you let men climb in and out
 like children off a school bus
 you let them come and leave
 you are a door,
 a necessary passage
 a life totem.

The New Sex Guide

Eudiah Kamonjo

MY NAME is Eudiah Kamonjo. I am a performance poet and a sex guide, but it has become increasingly hard to separate my work as a sex guide from my work as a poet/artist whose current themes of exploration are sexuality/sensuality. I am often referred to as a sexologist, but I do not like the label mainly because I feel like I am more of a hands-on person. I never used to give my real name during the initial sessions, preferring, instead, to use “Sue.” Today, however, I have fully embraced my work as a sex guide and now talk about it as a part of who I truly am.

In the beginning, my motivation was the much needed money as well as the thrill of a new experience. Today, that hasn’t changed much but I additionally like the difference our encounters make to clients and the population at large. For many, it opens them up to experiences which were previously thought of as myth. I specialize in squirting orgasms and my experience so far has given me opportunity to better understand people, sexualities and life in general.

I started performing squirting orgasms before groups of women over seven years ago, as an assistant to Jay, one of the few male sex therapists in the country. Our main focus at the time were bridal showers and other such female gatherings or parties. Over the years, the sessions have grown to include men who come solo or as part of a couple. Though I have been performing on stage for as long as I can remember, preparing for

the squirting demos always make me nervous.

A typical session starts with introductions. Then we ask random questions to set everyone at ease: the clients' relationship status, favourite sex positions, expectations. Usually, the clients would ask or write down their questions and we would answer them. A regular session averages three hours. Jay would sometimes share instructional videos or distribute them to the clients for later viewing. They seem most eager to see the squirting demo by one of their own, an uncommon sight. By the time Jay cues me in, I am mellowed out and ready. Having changed into some sexy lingerie or fancy costume, I pick up my sex toys and lube, and the show begins.

I love it when one of the females touches, kisses or uses the sex toys on me. This also seems to excite the clients; being involved in the show means there is no fraud to it and there is always more to talk about. Sometimes I use a vibrator on myself, other times a dildo or fingers will do. When I finally get to the point of the squirting orgasm, which is the “fountain” they have been waiting to witness, startled but excited exclamations always erupt from the clients. Some of them try to smell or touch the squirt to ascertain that it is not just urine. Some of them do not really think it can happen to every woman. Others have this idea that it is an ability exclusive to Ugandan and Rwandan women. But in this work, we have ensured that all kinds of women get squirting orgasms — even Caucasian women living in Kenya have been our clients. The work involves a lot of education and myth-busting.

After my performance comes the practical session, and clients who wish to learn

are moved into a separate bedroom where we teach them how to squirt, sensations to expect and the positions that are best. I never used to believe that every woman could squirt until I met Jay. His nickname is Magic Fingers because he makes women cum so easily with his fingers. Many women are tense when it is their turn to learn, but somehow they eventually relax. Even the ones who keep saying out loud, *I can't do this!*, eventually squirt. Most times, they don't even believe the orgasm that beautifully flows through them is theirs. The best part of what we do is in that moment when they accept what their bodies are capable of.

For the women, the question is always: how do I ensure my partner makes me get there? For couples who come to our sessions, we try to teach them how to make their partners get to the point of that very necessary orgasm. This is usually the most crucial part and sometimes requires extra sessions or constant practice in the comforts of their home, armed with practical information. I think this part is the most challenging, because it takes time to unlearn certain things, and requires knowledge, awareness and patience on their end. It is always interesting to hear clients admit that coming for our sessions opened them up sexually. Personally, I think that this lack of information on sex changed when Africans became so deeply religious that our own traditional ways of passing on the knowledge of sex became taboo. And this is what we are doing, passing on that knowledge, albeit differently.

Working with Jay enriched me in so many ways. When I first started, I thought that my body was not beautiful enough. Over the years, seeing other African women's bodies and vaginas made me realize that I am beautiful just that way I am. There was no

need to have a bikini body or the much sought-after perfectly curvaceous body with a big, African booty to boot. Usually I hear some of the women exclaim during our sessions, *Look at her vagina, it's as black as ours. So real!* Also, being bisexual gifts me the fluidity required for this job. Some clients have requested that I join them for threesomes or asked to see live sex with a woman or a man as a way of learning. It is interesting to feel how the women react when my male partner lifts me high up, placing my vagina on his face during our kind of foreplay or when he finally takes off his clothes and they can see his penis. But most of all, they love to see both of us orgasm.

THE SUPPRESSION of our sexual expression plays a huge part in the need for the work I do, as I believe that sexual enlightenment is truly crucial to our overall wellbeing. Full awareness of the self is not possible without sexual awareness. I find that clients I meet years after our first session or some other kind of interaction are more accepting, confident and even beautiful. I believe this is what happened to me: my own awareness and acceptance of 'self' led to my increased self-confidence on and off-stage. I can now fearlessly talk about who I am, and why I am here, what I love most during sex and everything else sexual with no fear of judgement because it is what it is.

My artistic and sexual explorations have brought me to this point where I now organize and host a monthly erotica event called "Indulgence Erotica Open Mic." Getting erotica lovers, writers and performers, especially women, has not been easy. I think one of the reasons is that when it comes to erotica, people are still afraid of being

judged. When you deeply look at the sexual lives of Kenyans, you will realize that we are actually a very liberal class of people. However, they like to *cheza chini* — keep it on the down low. “Indulgence Erotica Open Mic” is the first Kenyan event focused on erotica, so my team and I have a long way to go in order to change people’s mindsets. For the first event, we had to change the venue because we risked being arrested. For some reason, erotica means pornography to the state and many people here, and changing this perception is not easy.

PEOPLE ARE quick to assume that I do not know God, which is as far from the truth as they can get. Sometimes I’d have a session on Saturday night, but by eight the next morning, I would be teaching Sunday School to five- and six-year-old children. Somehow, I had created a life that was fulfilling both spiritually and sexually. But I stopped teaching Sunday School when I got pregnant. A single, pregnant woman teaching Sunday School would not have gone down very well with the Children’s pastor at the time. I love children and still seek ways of engaging with them in life. My three-year-old means the world to me and I thank God that I was finally gifted with the beauty that is motherhood.

THINGS HAVE changed since I began this work over seven years ago. There are more sex therapists in my country and few of them, like Jay, are men. Most are women. Women were the *sengas*, sex aunties, in some traditional African cultures. I work alone

now, but sometimes I partner with Jay when a male perspective is necessary. Mine is always a double coming-out; first as a sex guide and then as a bisexual. Kenyans are still not used to the idea of people shamelessly coming out. I don't even get offended when people use the wrong pronouns or ask: so, are you the *man* or *woman* in the relationship? I take it in stride and use the opportunity to educate them about different kinds of sexualities and gender identities and how they affect our sex lives. These issues are not often spoken about in the open and, hence, confuse a lot of people. People are talking about sex a lot recently, but still in a limited, misinformed way. I believe parents, and guardians, play a crucial role in moulding children from a young age, by educating them on sexuality in an honest and sensitive way that ensures that our children can always come back to us with anything. That is how my mother raised my siblings and me.

I KNOW my work borders between sex work, therapy and art, but I don't care much about fitting in anywhere. People assume that people in my profession can't be in marriages or long-term partnerships. Not true. I really look forward to expanding my little family that is currently comprised of just my daughter and me. This year, I am working on releasing my first collection of poetry. It is a collection I started working on even before I grew into my work as a sex guide. It explores human sexuality, because, as humans, everyone is born through sexual energy and, for most, it is such an intense and beautiful thing. My greatest hope is that my works invite conversations, acceptance and even tolerance of our diverse sex lives.

Moonlight

Anthony Madukwe

WE ARE running. Our feet are slapping against wet grass, kicking up plastic bottles and a series of other items that usually litter unkempt lawns. Our breaths are quick and laboured, hearts pounding in what we know is not fear but the excitement of wild mischief. In the distance, a rickety car engine can be heard—it is the sound of the school's security vehicle attempting to drive round the walkway and block us out. We are running furiously, but we are also giggling, your chuckles coming in-between gasps for air, mine coming in-between yours. The naughtiness that we have always known is flowing like current waves through us. In the midst of this erratic scramble for safety, I haven't even lost my erection. My zipper is half open and your red panties are visible above the top of your jeans, highlighted by the moonlight. You are a faster runner than I am, and I am grateful for this. I want you ahead, your legs eating up the distance moments before I do. Disguising this under concern for your safety, I am delighted and aroused by the way half of your ass is jiggling out of your trousers and how the poor thing can barely hold them in place.

IT IS the second time tonight that I am positioned behind you.

I LOST two-thirds of my senses when you rubbed your ass against my crotch at the canteen. I knew it wasn't intentional but it was enough. The warmth this slightest of contacts gave my dick was catastrophically sufficient. I pressed against your behind in further proof of how forgetful I had become of common sense. Which sensible man feeds his erection in a public eatery? But there was enough sense left to help me do this in sleek expertise. It was the University's canteen and there was a small crowd of loud, hungry students in the poorly lit restaurant, leaning against the counter as they made their orders for food and waited to receive them. We were surrounded by hungry bodies, each yelling out instructions as to what kind of meat placated their hunger and how the jollof rice should outweigh the beans and the fried plantain better be very ripe. It was delightful rowdiness because no one had an idea of the sacrilegious growth taking place inside certain trousers.

I KNEW you could feel the bulge, as I tried to position it between the cleft of your ass cheeks. I knew this because you responded with equal vigour, pressing back against me and making almost negligible riding motions that only the keenest of eyes would notice. My penis threw itself at you, throbbing with expectation as your ass continued to rub against it. Denim and cotton the only things separating us, as warmth from your behind incited a rapidly-hardening arrow-shaped flesh. I compelled myself to appear normal

while fire flared through me. Your ease at this impromptu intimacy surprised me. You pulled this off while still placing our orders. Such senseless people we were. Trays in hand, how we managed to find a table without pulling the attention of the world to ourselves remains a mystery. But then, how do we cope with an appetite that has been brutally pulled out of our bodies and replaced by another? This new hunger was a more fiery kind, existing primarily in the eyes and loins. We were patient enough to eat the meat on our food before strolling out with pretend dignity, minds occupied by an unspoken mission to find a place devoid of bodies.

BEHIND THE Law block was the first option we encountered. The best place, it turned out. It had well cut grass, sufficient cover of trees and no humans. We had adjudged my room a distance too far, unwilling to risk the loss of our passions on a journey that would take almost twelve minutes. A classroom is risky—too many serious, studying students. So we lay on the grass as I vigorously tackled the centre of your thighs with my hands, alternating between right and left. Finding too much pleasure in the sound of your moans and in the way they interspersed with throaty complaints about how this was the wrong place and time. About how I was being evil to get you this aroused in a place we had no chance of completing what we were starting. But then a strong breeze blew across our faces informing us that the universe was okay with this. That someone with nature's switch had flicked on some green neon lights and accompanied it with a thumbs up sign blazing across a backdrop. My right hand was now lodged permanently within your panties and feeling the warm wetness of your vagina's lips. It was a moist affair as

my middle finger slid in. Your moans, louder and more senseless, set the tone for more writhing, your body confused as to how to react to the waves rushing through you. I slid in a second finger and you arched your body, twisting and turning, to be closer to me. You leaned in and ran your tongue around the edges of my ear, at the same time running your hand down my front and taking hold of my painfully erect dick. This was the precise moment when I lost one third of my religion.

THERE I was, calculating the rigidity of your nipple and how thin your bra was, and finding that if I traced your areolas with my tongue, attached my lips to your nipples and pulled with gentle firmness, that your breasts came alive. That they stood to answer a young man's call. There I was, and there you were, both of us about to discover familiar secrets, when we noticed the noises getting closer. Harsh voices, heavy footsteps.

The flashlight found your breasts first, and then wavered down towards my just-about-half-open trousers. Then the shouts followed. We did not wait to hear what words were being barked at us. We did not pause to cover the parts of ourselves that had been exposed to uncouth eyes. We simply stood and fled, dashing behind the nearest block of classrooms and wading in-between low-hanging trees. I was not surprised at how swift the transition was from sexual tension to survival.

WE ARE now lying face-up on my bed. Mine is one of those apartments attached to the back of a lecturer's quarters where I share a room with a usually absent engineering

student. Racing down here left us panting, sweat dripping down our bodies. It was good exercise. We are laughing now, throwing our voices into the darkness and enjoying the proximity of our warm bodies. There is no light, but streaks of moonlight have stolen in through the slats of the only window in the room. We remain like this for several minutes. What we are doing is holding this moment between our teeth, resting safe in the beauty that the story of this night will become.

Soon, you are giggling into my ear and rubbing your right hand across my chest. You can feel my heartbeat. I am calm now. I place my hand over yours and join the rubbing motion finally leading your hand lower and lower until it feels, again, my desire. Rather than lost from the anxieties of our race, the passion within us is keenly felt, as though we were never interrupted. If anything, we are even more aroused, more challenged to prove the headiness of our libidos. You lead the way with your hand down the first barrier that separates us. Now your fingers have dug in, and with slight discomfort, my dick escapes containment. It embraces this refreshing freedom and gently nods its appreciation for your effort. For the second time tonight, it is now enclosed in your palm. We are kissing while your right hand begins the familiar motion, the one that sees your palm, soft and wet with sweat, sliding up and down, hilt to ridge. What are you doing to me?

As I turn to face you, I force patience upon myself and dedicatedly remove the buttons on your blouse. I can feel the tremors of your skin as each button leaves its hole. I am forcing this patience on you as well. The most you get is a kiss even though you are already making whispery entreaties for me to place your legs on my shoulders. Clothes

are removed gently, yours and mine. Then I spend several seconds staring at the parts of your body highlighted by the moonlight. Your curves are a delicious sight, your skin so clean, I want to do more than kiss it.

I place myself in-between your thighs and navigate my penis until it finds warm comfort in the walls of flesh that quickly gather around it. It is with reasonable difficulty that I slip into you, covering inch upon inch of moist space. Your legs are spread in a posture of offering, my hips finding yours in a motion that is creating these slapping sounds. I lean in and kiss you again, tongue finding tongue, eyes closed as our lips become each other's. I can feel your fingers digging into my back and this is not even painful. You are saying incoherent things, calling my name in a language I am hearing for the first time. And this is what we were made for: to grunt at each other. We continue until I feel your body quiver in orgasmic spasms. Mine comes later, the waves pouring through what I think is my soul. I collapse beside you, my body at ease, and my hand pulling you gently to my chest. It is not long before we feel our eyes closing, our hearts at peace with the world. In the distance, a siren can be heard, loud and lonely.

You Handsome Lady-Killer

Osinachi

YOU LIVE alone in a BQ rented out to you by a lecturer at a price triple of what your school fees is. Your BQ is well furnished with a rug and not a carpet; a television and a DVD player, not just your laptop; a stereo set that often makes the lecturer send his housemaid to ask you to turn it down; wallpapers of men and women in sexy positions. Your mattress is so big and comfortable. Only the most fragrant air freshener is used. For this, your room is the most sought-after whenever your friends want to fuck and are looking for a wholesome place to do so. That's the way you always do it, you and your friends. It's a kind of ritual, a kind of pre-planned method for your circle because konji could be holding one of you whose room, unfortunately, is being occupied by other friends. Or even, sometimes, a roommate. Your room always impresses the girls.

YOU FUCK with some girls, too. They are different from the ones you know back home in Mubi. There, most girls wore hijab and often hurried past you and your mates shyly. But you liked them too. Somehow, the shyness fell away with their coverings and some would even use their mouths to start on you. Here now, you are seeing girls who boldly show their faces and give you signals when they want to fuck. You always think about it

every time you set foot in the university mosque, and you always think how much these Igbo boys and girls have spoiled you. But you love it and even tell Hajiya, your mother, that they are very good people. You dare not mention the sex part.

And really, they are very good people. They have always been there for the past two years on your birthdays. And they bring presents for you: presents that the females follow with a peck on the cheek and the males follow with a sturdy handshake. Like the video camera Chioma gave you on your last birthday. After a brief obsession with the camera in which you imagined that your career as a Mass Communication final year student-turned-newscaster had already started, you buried it in your box where you keep other things you don't need so often.

Three weeks later, an opportunity to use the camera comes when Andrew calls.

"Hassan, where you dey?"

You close your textbook, "I dey my house."

"Guy, parole dey o."

You smile. "Who be dat now?"

"You no go know am. Fifteen minutes time we go show." And he hangs up.

You always make it a point of duty to know the girls your friends bring to your room. Sometimes they want to know why you always insist on that and you tell them that it is your room after all. But that is not true. It is the thrill of knowledge, especially when you look at the named girls on campus, walking as though they don't defecate. When you

recall that some of them have been fucked in your room, you laugh, and imagine them naked with you, too. Sometimes, you imagine them as your left hand grips your dick. Andrew has decided not to tell you who he is coming with, but there is no need asking. You know what to do. You smile to yourself, look at the clock, 17:47, and go straight to your box. You set up the camera where no one can see it, inside your backpack in the corner of your room, its lens peeking out and fixed on your bed. You put every other thing in your room right, hide the key in the usual place where Andrew can find it and walk down the road, to Kingsley's.

YOU GROW impatient waiting for Andrew's call as the time crawls past seven. Normally, anyone who uses your room with a girl will not waste more than an hour. You are tired of Kingsley's gospel music and decide to take a walk to clear your head when Andrew's call comes through.

"We don't finish, Hassan." There is urgency in his voice, like a child trying to speak after crying. You do not ask him anything though. Suppressing your excitement, you tell Kingsley that you are leaving. You try your best not to run as your heart crunches with each step.

Andrew has a muscular body, the kind you envy even though many say that such a body often deprives a man full endowment between his legs. But Andrew claims he is well endowed and knows how to give it to a lady. You are going to see for yourself, and you are also going to see the girl he does not want to reveal to you. The thought of

watching your first homemade sex-tape causes you to harden and you wonder if you have gone mad.

You find the key under the large stone where you left it for Andrew. When you go into your room, the kind of hot air that bursts from the lungs of a long-muzzled man hits your face. It is laced with the smell of sweat, which turns you off a bit. You switch your fan on to the highest and pull off your shirt and unbuckle your jeans. When you bring out the camera, your hands are trembling. You sit on your bed and make sure that you are comfortable before you turn out the little monitor on the camera and start playing back the video recording.

In the recording, the room is very quiet.

You fast-forward until you hear a sound coming from the camera.

Andrew opening the door and saying, "Please make yourself comfortable."

A girl giggles and sits on the bed. She is in a mini skirt and her top is red. She has long braids that settle on her shoulders like ropes. And...Helen! You realize it is Helen of Archaeology and Tourism department. Andrew! How can he say that you do not know Helen when it was through you that he got to know her? Did he think that you'd feel bad knowing that he was going to have her before you? You are annoyed with Andrew but when he appears again on the camera, seated close to Helen, you pay more attention to what is about to happen.

"Is this your room?" Helen asks Andrew, looking around.

“No. It’s a friend’s. He travelled and left the key with me. We would have gone to my place but—” Helen fixes her lips on Andrew’s. *Aah, Andrew! You handsome lady killer!* Andrew’s hands go to her breasts and you imagine the feel of her breasts on your palms. You rest your back on the wall and spread your legs, your erection tightening against your trousers. Your eyes are glued to the screen as Helen pulls Andrew’s T-shirt off. She throws the shirt on the floor without looking as her hands run wildly on those muscles that remind you of puff-puff, those swollen snacks with too much oil in them.

Andrew is too fast with Helen: your left hand has barely encountered your swollen penis and they are naked already, her back on the bed. Andrew’s buttocks hanging above Helen’s crotch is a mass of bread tied too tightly with a transparent polythene bag. It shimmers with sweat. His penis is not what you thought it would be: it *is* big, bigger than yours. When he holds it, looking to thrust into Helen, she says, “No. Where is the condom?”

Andrew hisses. “Do I look like I have HIV or AIDS? Do I look like a baby?”

In the next few minutes, nothing else happens but their bodies moving on the mattress, Helen’s voice rising and falling in tandem with Andrew’s gleaming buttocks. You see that Andrew is being too fast, too furious. There is no difference between him fucking and the day he fought another student. He mutters angrily to himself and then lifts his hands from the bed and places them on Helen’s shoulders. You hear as Helen complains of his weight and watch as those hands go up to her neck, Andrew still moving in her. You have seen this in porn: people who want to choke others or be

choked during sex. You wonder if it is something you should try out.

Soon Helen is gasping for air but Andrew does not let go. You frown and release your dick from your sweaty grip. *Why is he not letting go of her?*

What she says comes out without proper vocal carriage: “What... Wha... You...focating me.”

She lifts her hands and beats his shoulders but Andrew does not let go. She struggles and in your confusion you want to jump into the camera and save her. Andrew keeps moving until his buttocks starts convulsing. Then he stops moving. He keeps his hands on Helen’s neck, the tenseness of his muscles pushing out the veins in his arms. Your penis coldly deflates and that same coldness trickles up your whole body.

Helen’s hands are moving. Andrew remains on top of her. When Helen stops moving, he makes the grip on her neck tighter. Then he shakes her and slaps her face as though to see whether she will move. She does not. Andrew gets off the bed, wipes his semen-tipped penis with Helen’s top and dresses up. From his pocket he picks out his phone and places a call.

“Yes. Come,” he says, and starts pacing the room.

In less than two minutes, two men enter the room and you watch as Andrew helps them roll Helen’s body into what looks like a large red bed sheet. Her eyes and her mouth still open.

“She don die true-true?” Andrew asks the men. “Her eyes still dey open.”

“Guy, she don die.” This one’s voice sounds like he has been smoking since morning.

“Where is the remaining part of my payment?”

“It’s in the car. Help us lift her to the boot first.” It is the other man with a milder voice.

They lift the corpse out, three of them. Soon, Andrew comes back inside. He goes around putting things right. He makes the bed look as perfect as you left it before going out. He picks up Helen’s clothes and stuffs them in his bag pack. He looks around the room again, long and carefully this time. Then his eyes fall on you, and linger, as he looks directly at the camera. He pulls out his phone again and starts dialling a number.

“We don finish, Hassan,” he says into the phone.

As he walks out with his backpack from the camera’s view, you hear a knock on your door. You put the camera down immediately and look towards the door, alert as a dog that has seen a spirit. Your whole body is trembling.

“Who...who is it?” you bring yourself to ask, trying to stop the tremor in your voice.

“It’s me,” the person at the door says.

“You, who?”

“Andrew.”

Hail Mary

Savannah Mafia

Hail Mary full of moans, whine your waist to a thousand blue songs.

Two cases collide:

One, I, burning from suppressed passions;

The other, you

Holding closed worlds in clenched fingers and moans.

The road, empty;

I trek miles bare skinned in penance,

and dresses fall in absolute surrender.

Naked we lie before the confessional,

Yours I am, lord, take me to heavenly places.

In seven scriptures of grace

Drawn on our stifling bodies,

Arousing in rising bulges of certainties

Nose upon nose, lips intertwined,

I, migrant, hoeing wetland

Fertile for pleasurable harvests

Whisper: "*Hail Mary full of moans, whine this your waist for me.*"

Vaginismus

Blessing Ofia-Inyinya Nwodo

I WAS in his car at night. Well, it wasn't really his car, it was his father's. One of those cars parents who have more than four children usually buy to accommodate them for trips to the village and to church. He was a Staff Kid, which was what students called boys and girls like him whose parents lectured in the university and lived on its premises.

My phone had rung in the evening. "Dera, can I come to your hostel by 9 p.m.?"

It was my boyfriend, Chimee.

"Okay," I said.

I was on the passenger seat and he was on the other side leaning against my chair, my fingers caressing his head. We used to joke that his mother used too much hot water to press his head when he was little, which was why the top looked somewhat like the apex of a pyramid with a round edge. Apart from this and a slightly large nose, the rest of him was adequate. Dark chocolate skin, six feet tall, and though he didn't have six packs, his stomach was flat and firm. Most times, he brought food along when coming; turkey boiled with herbs which he made himself, or hot suya with sliced onions, pepper, cucumber, tomatoes, and a drink to wash it down. Today it was cupcakes and a soft

drink.

“You’ll make me fat bringing me food at night,” I complained half-heartedly and took a gulp.

“Okay, should I stop bringing food?” he asked, staring at me slyly.

I punched his arm. “Don’t you dare,” I said in a mock stern voice. He laughed, using his thumb to brush a crumb from my lip.

Too bad our relationship ended that day.

THAT NIGHT, the parking lot was as busy as a bank. Sean Paul’s “Get Busy” blared from the stereo, and all around us, cars were coming in to pick up girls from the hostel and some were driving out. Others cars were parked like ours, their drivers waiting for their girls to come down. Some couples were in their cars; others were outside sitting on or leaning against theirs. Laughter could be heard all around. There were those without cars, sitting on motorcycles or cement blocks or just standing in secluded corners. Once in a while, a car would drive in and, in the darkness pierced by light, someone would yell, “Hey! Guy, turn off that light!”

“ADA, I want to lick your pussy,” Chimee said to me abruptly.

That is how our relationship moved. By request. *Chimee, I want to see you. Chimee I*

want your dick in my mouth. Now that he'd said it, I realized I wanted it, too. My clit began to throb. Then his phone rang. He groaned, "This better be an important call." He picked it. "Hello?" *It's my brother,* he mouthed to me. I leaned over and ran my right hand over his crotch. He looked at me and licked his soft lips, letting me see the desire pooled in his eyes. "Yes, I told him to collect it," he said.

I slowly unzipped his shorts and put my hand down his boxers. He cleared his throat and continued talking. I smiled mischievously. I took out his stiffening cock and it hardened and lengthened more in my palm. I stroked it up and down and listened to his voice falter as he kept talking. I smiled. I lowered my head and swirled my tongue around the head of his cock while pumping his length with my hand. I moaned, relishing the feel of him on my lips. His chest was heaving, bellying the calm tone he was speaking in.

"Okay, I will. Let me call you later."

He ended the call and lifted me off his cock. My mouth made a smacking sound as I left it, and his mouth crashed onto mine, urging me to climb across and straddle his lap. I was not wearing panties underneath my skirt. He aligned his cock with my pussy and urged me on with his hands at my hips to rub it on him. He groaned with pleasure as my pussy lips stroked him from end to end, I wrapped my arms around his neck and he nuzzled mine and plastered it with kisses. When he got to my ear, it tickled and I laughed. A couple came close to the car and the possibility that they might hear us increased my desire. We humped and moaned like we were fucking, my hips rotating in small circles, rubbing my crotch on his sweet, turgid length.

Then he slipped a hand between our bodies, easing it down to the point where we humped and I began to sweat. But it wasn't from exertion. I tried to force myself to relax, but I could feel my pleasure riding away on the back of a cheetah. When he touched my clit with a finger, I moaned from habit rather than from genuine satisfaction. I let my right hand fall away from his chest and hang loose, in case I needed to react quickly. He parted my folds and I could feel myself retreat mentally even when I tried to stay put. Then he tried to slip two fingers in me. I snapped quickly and grabbed his hand tightly with the hand I had readied exactly for this purpose. He tried to shake my hand off, intent on penetrating me but my desire had been doused with a bucket of cold water. I scrambled off him and onto the passenger seat, my leg hitting the steering wheel as I moved. He sighed and stared out of his window.

LEAVING THE car to walk into the hostel was not something I looked forward to. My steps became awkward as I imagine that everyone knows what I've done and are sneering. There was no light when I got to my room. My roommate had left the door open for me and was asleep. I locked the door, kicked off my slippers and flopped down on my bed, tears stinging my eyes. That's how most of my "relationships" ended: no penetration, no relationship. But I had been penetrated once.

I was about eight years old and my father had left me at home with his brother. He was in my room and the towel wrapped around his waist came off. Still, it had happened long ago so it couldn't be what was holding me back. Or was it? I told myself

daily that I could not let that incident mar me, but I was no longer sure. Every time penetrative sex was attempted on me, all kinds of fear settled heavily on my shoulders, weighing me down, making it hard to breathe. Sometimes, using my hand felt better and all I need do was close my eyes and visualize some porn I had watched.

I REACHED for my clit and, behind my closed eyelids, there were four black men in the room and a white girl spread out on a table, pussy open for everyone to see. They were all stroking their cocks, awaiting their turn. One stepped forward and jammed his huge cock into that deliciously pink hole and started to fuck her with deep thrusts. My finger massaged my clit as another guy reached out to sharply slap hers. She jerked, moaning loudly, and I felt it in mine, my fingers moving rapidly and harder over my clit. I was close. He continued to tease it while the other fucked her, her white breast topped with pink nipples bouncing up and down with each thrust of the black guy, his ass taut, muscles straining with the effort. I loved watching people fuck. *So why don't you want to try it then?* I pushed the thought away and concentrated on my release. I was careful not to make a sound or rustle the sheets too much. My ears alert for any movement from my roommate who seemed fast asleep. Another man stepped up and rammed his cock into her mouth and she began to suck greedily while another took her hand and guided it up and down his throbbing cock while flicking her nipples. *Yes! Fuck that pussy!* Sweat rolled down my body.

WHEN I masturbate, I liked to use my imagination, because there, I could feel only the pleasure and blot out reality. In my mind, I could concentrate on a hand tapping the girl's clit, writhing on my bed as she does on the table, I could zoom in on another guy stroking his big cock with his palm. Watching it, on the other hand, could be distracting as the camera shifts without my permission, and a moment is often lost. I concentrated now on a dick slipping into the wet, pink pussy and sliding out, a rhythm. I held onto that image, my hand moving incredibly fast on my clit. I came: the pleasure washing over me in waves. In that moment, every inhibition was stripped away, the voices in my head drowned out. In those few seconds of release, I was not at war with myself. I was in the process of signing a treaty, my body and my mind. My roommate could wake up and watch me and I would be unable to stop myself from coming, and calling out the names of guys my body rejected. *Fuck me Ade— Please fuck me, Chimee...*

SO WHY can't you fuck them? Why won't you come like this with a man? Is it their inefficiency or you?

THE VOICES in my head are back in full battle regalia, the treaty washed away with the last waves of my orgasm. I had read somewhere that women who have issues with their fathers find it hard to orgasm with men. I wondered again if that was my problem as I slipped my hand from my panties and listened to my roommate's snores. As my eyelids fluttered close in sleep, I wondered if Chimee would call in the morning.

The Morning After

DT Harry

I AM not surprised to find that she is just as beautiful in the first rays of the morning as she was last night, under the green-blue-red laser lights of Club Venus. She is perhaps more beautiful now because she is naked and barefaced and her dark lips are curled in a slight smile. I wonder what she is dreaming about. I have seen her at other clubs before, but never in Venus. She is usually red-lipped and kohl-eyed, dressed entirely in black. Sometimes, she is in the company of Hassan and them—you know, the pretentious literary set; other times she arrives on her own and mingles with strangers in shadowy corners. She intrigues me.

She was dancing on her own when I met her yesterday. I had been aggressively shouldering my way past bodies in a haze of belligerent tipsiness, towards the exit. On the illuminated screen of the phone in my fist were the words: *Rain check?* The offending message came in after I had waited 45 minutes for my perennially inconsiderate, on-again-off-again lover who obviously had better plans for the night. I was spoiling for a fight, eager to find a quiet spot to call my jilter and give her a piece of my mind.

The DJ suddenly switched to Shabba Ranks and a cheering horde stampeded the dance floor, catching me up and pulling me back into the thick. And there she was—in

the midst of the crush—rolling her denim-sheathed hips, sweat glistening on her bare arms. I doubt I would have approached her if I had not been beer-fuelled, but I was, and so I did. At first we danced around each other, grinning like loons, then she linked her fingers behind my neck and pulled me close. We undulated in perfect synchronicity, her warm body firmly plastered against my sweat-soaked front, my fingers tapping out the rhythm on her backside.

Then, miraculously, we ended up at my house.

I had learned, in the self-conscious silence of the ride back, that her name was Lali, and that she didn't usually go home with strangers but she had seen me around and had heard I was one of the good ones. I discovered the moistness of her lips on my nape as I bent to fumble with my house keys, and again on my cheek and mouth before I pulled her into the bedroom.

We came up for air. "Do you want anything? A drink? Some water perhaps?" I avoided her gaze, desperately hoping that she wasn't about to say she had to leave. Her laugh caught me unawares.

"I've made a mess! You're covered in my lipstick!" Her face was stained crimson from nose to chin.

We took turns to wash in the bathroom. I came out wet, trembling with excitement to find her naked and, unbelievably, fast asleep. She was lying on her stomach with her head on her arms and her breasts spilling from underneath. I caressed the pale, plump flesh before me and whispered her name. She responded with a soft snore. I

groaned and fell in beside her. The world dipped and rolled behind my eyelids and then I slept off.

SHE FINALLY stirs at around a quarter to ten. I am drinking freshly brewed ginger tea and checking emails when she stretches her arms above her head and sits up beside me. The covers slowly slither off her torso, hooking on a large, dark nipple before pooling at her waist. I am utterly transfixed by her breasts which are full-bottomed and hang heavy like ripened fruit. And have I said how beautiful she is? I set the laptop down on the bedside table.

“Sleep well?”

She nods and grabs my mug; her embarrassment is adorable. The warm liquid sloshes around the rim but does not pour. “I had too much to drink last night.”

I remember she drinks her liquor straight, no ice, no mixer. “Careful,” I warn. She tastes it and grimaces. “Drink up. It’s good for a hangover.”

As she sips, I touch her thigh, first over the cotton sheets and then under them. She spreads her legs and watches me over the rim of the mug. Her skin is warm and supple under my slowly circling fingers. I find my way to her mound and rake my fingernails through an abundance of tightly curled hair. My fingers dip into silky wetness.

The sound Lali makes as she sets down the mug is part moan, part exhalation. She grabs my face with both hands and kisses me. Her tongue is warm and frenzied in

my mouth. The urgency of her excitement arouses me and I am full to bursting underneath my dressing gown. I growl in my throat and pull her on top to straddle me. My hands find her breasts and knead their fullness. Her breaths come in soft, fragrant bursts against my lips. I draw my head away and bend to seize a puffy nipple. I start with licks, but soon I am sucking furiously, trying to cram her breast into my mouth. She is pressing my head to her bosom, smothering me in the generosity of her soft flesh. I can barely breathe, but I am prepared to die a thousand little deaths by her hand. We are both moaning. Now she is riding my thighs and tearing at my dressing gown. I shrug off the fabric and she swoops down on the bare skin underneath.

Lali administers sloppy kisses from my neck to my collarbone and down the centre of my chest. I close my eyes, rigid with anticipation as she tongues the vellus trail below my navel. I am desperate to push her head further south. Instead, I busy my hands by fondling my breasts. My nipples are deliciously achy nubs. I notice she has stopped kissing, and I open my eyes. She is staring at me and smiling wickedly, her lips shiny with spit. "Tell me what you want," she whispers.

I shiver. The wetness between my legs seeps down my buttocks. "I want you to eat me."

She laughs and pushes my legs apart. I raise my knees and plant my feet on the mattress. Her first lick is deliberately slow, from swollen lips to clit. I sigh with pleasure and raise my hips to meet her mouth. As she eats, she tells me how wet I am, and how good I taste. Soon she is focused on my clit, sucking and working her tongue at the same

time. I grit my teeth at the wall of sensation building up in my pelvis.

“I’m going to cum,” I gasp.

Lali carries on like she doesn’t hear. Suddenly she slides two fingers deep into me. I explode in pleasure, spasming around her thrusting fingers. When she brings the fingers to my mouth, I suck at them greedily, relishing the familiar tang of my juices.

“Your turn,” I say, after I regain myself. She positions herself according to my instructions; on her knees, face buried in a pillow. Her plump buttocks are spread, glistening with wetness. I trail a thumb from her dripping labia to the pucker of her arsehole, savouring the aroma of her musk. She shudders as I lower my head.

The S-Word

Ernest Ogunyemi

THE FIRST night you did it with him, it was on the long, black sofa chair in his living room, with its bright white walls. The way he pulled at your dress, unclipped your bra, and went on to lift and drop you on the sofa amazed you. So swift and precise, like a hawk picking a chick before its mother knew. The way he glided into you and made you release sharp moans as the thrusts came. You wanted to ask him at what age he first touched a woman, because he was so good at it. The way he held you firm, like Ilaje men holding fishing nets. You wanted to tell him that Uncle Kola in Ibadan was the first to move between your thighs, but you stopped yourself.

As he eased out of you and lay behind you, your bodies wrapped, as he kissed your lips and you softly scraped the brown hair on his face, as he said *I love you*, you wanted to tell him love wasn't what you thought of when a guy touched you. All that came flooding in your mind was the day Uncle Kola forced himself on you. But you looked into his green-gold eyes and said *I love you too*. Because you didn't feel the same way you felt—like shit—when the beast cast the spittle-like thing on your body, drew his trousers up and buckled his belt. You told him instead that when he eased out of you, you felt at ease. You felt something very close to wholeness.

IT WOULD be silly, very silly, to meet a guy for the first time back home and open your legs wide to him, you told him the next evening when you met in the small pub down Oak Lane. You expected him to laugh, because you felt ridiculous having given yourself to him so easily, like you were pizza, not worth a dollar. But he didn't, and you could swear that was what he was thinking, but he held your hands and said, "All that matters is that I love you."

You expected him to say more. You wanted him to say more. But you soon came to know he was not like Coles, his friend, who prided himself in the number of asses he'd sliced with his big dick. "And mosta 'em are cool black girls," he'd say. "Black girls sweet, like ambrosia, or banana splits, with all that stuff. You know the big boobs, huge like mountain Ararat—you know the behind, all curvy and bouncy like two big heads in those tight jeans. Oh geez! And when they cock your gun, you can't but swell, bro. You just swell and swell like that white floury thing I took at your place the other day." He wouldn't stop talking, and you hated the way he referred to garri as *that white floury thing*. You'd laughed that day when you served them garri soaked in water with roasted fish and ground pepper. He stuck out his tongue to fan it and, afterwards, ran into the toilet to throw up. You called him a pregnant woman, because in every movie you watched on *African Magic*, when a lady started vomiting she must be pregnant.

That was the same day you had sex on Stephen's black sofa, with the lights on and the door unlocked. You wanted to tell him that when Papa and Mama wanted sex in

the afternoons, “Go outside and play” was the cue, and you would file out of the room with your siblings and they would lock the door. They may have thought you too young to know what sex was, but you already knew, because sometimes you heard them do it at night behind the curtain which divided the room into two, when they thought you all asleep. You knew because it was the same thing your uncle did with you when your parents were not home. Back home, no one said the S-word out loud.

The next morning, when you told him you were leaving for classes and he drew you back to himself, and you had another round, you wanted to tell him too that sex was not food. That it was just *something*, one of those things, but you couldn’t say a word because you knew how Papa did it with all kinds of girls—yellow, dark, tall, short, skinny, plump. And you knew how Mama always gave it to him like food whenever he came to her. That was why you had four younger brothers and three sisters, even though there was not enough money. You wanted to tell him of the many hungry nights; instead you begged him to fill you up. That day in class, all you thought about was how little you ever said, how much you’d come to share.

YOU RARELY stayed in your apartment as his place was now home. And that night, he said you should both go to see a movie at the cinema down your street. As you folded in his arms, feeling the warmth of his body, hearing his calm heartbeat, you wanted to whisper in his ears. You wanted to tell him of the first time you saw a BF. You knew he would ask what BF means, and you would have told him it meant Blue Film. You wanted

to tell him it was on your Deacon's phone in church you first saw porn. His daughter, Mary, had said she wanted to show you something, and what she showed you was a naked man digging something very long into a woman from the back, like a dog. But you didn't need to tell him, because that night he gave it to you that same way in the kitchen.

So that night when you told him that Mama was dying and everyone was begging you to come back, you saw the tears gathering like an African rain in his eyes, you straddled him and didn't stop fucking until you were both drenched in perspiration, like kids who had played in the rain. At the airport, he held you to himself and said *Jo padawa*. You laughed because he had never spoken Yoruba in such a sweet way, like a bird weaving a tune at dawn.

NOW BACK at home, you stare at the blank screen. You want to write him but don't know what to write about. You find words. Are you going to tell him of Boko Haram? Of the cry for secession from the East? Of Mama begging your forgiveness for not believing your father's brother had done that thing to you?

Do you remember that day we saw Cole behind the hall, with that girl, Patricia in his arms, moving like oiled wheels? All things working together for good.

After you've asked him if he remembers how you called it dirty—having sex in public—you tell him: *Danfo drivers do it anywhere, Steve. In car parks, toilets, and even in empty buses and buildings.* You would end it by telling him of the short film you're working on which would cut through different sub-topics, from how in Africa sex is painted as

dangerous and yet condoned in child marriages to how generally, it enables a culture of silence after sexual abuse.

And you send it to him.

He replies minutes later: *Baby, we haven't really changed either. It's almost the same here.*

When are you coming back?

Wouldn't It Be Nice?

Erhu Amreyan

IT WAS Mandi's birthday again, the second time that year. Mandi the foul mouthed; Mandi the serial dater with a string of one-night stands that could be a world record; Mandi with a degree in Religious Studies; Mandi whose parents were ordained Reverends; Mandi my best friend whom I could not do without. Paul, Nina, Wole and I accompanied her to a club by the beach to celebrate.

"Let's get this party fucking started!" Mandi shouted as soon as she entered the club. She loved dramatic entrances and the attention it got her. As if her Paris Hilton-inspired dress was not enough. We found a booth and settled in. A waiter came to take our orders, his eyes twitching. Paul answered him. Paul was paying for the party as a way to show Mandi that he was Boyfriend Material. He was in love. What he did not know at the time was Mandi and Wole had a "friends with benefits" thing going on. And a pretty hard core one at that; I knew because they'd once invited me for a threesome. I'd declined. Nina who looked like she just woke up from a century-old sleep made sure the waiter brought only malt drinks for her. Being a house officer in the General Hospital was no walk in the park indeed. Nina groaned and placed her head on Wole's shoulder.

"Hey doctor," Mandi shook her hand at Nina. "Don't bring that mood here."

Keep it in your operating room.”

“Leave her alone, Mandi,” I reproached her laughing at Nina’s tired face. “She made it here so you should be thankful.”

Mandi beamed and leaned over the table to hug Nina. “I know sweetie.” She kissed Nina on both cheeks and Nina chuckled, trying to get away from her grasp. “I am so grateful.” She sat back down and yelled when the drinks arrived. “Let’s get fucked up! Whooo!”

“Hear! Hear!” Wole shouted, opening the bottle of vodka.

As the night progressed Mandi wanted us to play a game of dares with her calling the shots. Birthday Girl rules. “If you refuse to do what I ask, you have to drink anything I give you. Even if it’s my piss,” she said and laughed.

“What?” she asked when she noticed Paul giving her a look. “I’m kidding. But not about giving you something to drink. Just alcohol, ok?” She rolled her eyes in annoyance and mouthed the word *cunts*. “Ok, let’s begin.” She drew the hookah pipe closer and took a drag before starting her silly game. And we played, humouring the crazy girl and her antics.

“Your turn again, Zara,” Mandi said looking around the club, trying to come up with something twisted for me to do. She got it at last. She pointed to a woman in a high, thigh-slit red dress, toned calf and tattooed thigh exposed, index finger swirling her drink. “I dare you to go kiss that woman.”

“Mandi! You’re crazy,” Paul said alarmed. “What if she has a boyfriend or a husband? What if she’s homophobic?”

Mandi ignored Paul. “Don’t try to even tell her what you’re about to do so you can peck her and come back here.”

I could not take any more of Mandi’s concoction. It was about time to do something daring anyway. I just did not plan on it bordering on sexual assault. I stood up quite ready to kiss a strange woman. Nina gasped, “She’s actually going to do it!”

“She knows she wants to,” Mandi replied, winking at me over the rim of her glass.

Steadily, I walked toward the woman knowing I could be punched right in the face or worse. *This is insane*, I kept telling myself. *Turn back. Turn back and drink more of Mandi’s poison.* The woman suddenly faced me. I had stopped right in front of her. She smiled when she saw me.

“I’m sorry,” I mumbled. She looked confused.

“Hello,” she said. “How—?”

“I’m sorry,” I said aloud and kissed her before she could say another word. I began my liturgy of apologies and explanations. She remained silent staring at me wide eyed. Her look soon changed to one of amusement. “I did not know these clubs were this raunchy. Hi, I’m Mayowa.” She was not angry. I turned to see my friends pretending not to know I existed.

“I’m really sorry,” I apologized again, gritting my teeth. “I’m Zara, nice to meet you.”

“It’s okay,” Mayowa brushed it aside. “Can I buy you a drink?”

SOON WE were talking over a bottle of white wine. Mayowa was a real estate attorney. She had come to the city to meet a client who bailed at the last minute. I was instantly captivated by her. She had travelled to so many exotic places and could speak four different languages fluently. I especially loved when she ordered another bottle of wine in French, leaving the bartender confused. I hung on her every word, completely forgetting why I had come to the club that night until Nina tapped me on the shoulder to let me know it was time to go. Mandi was no longer herself.

“I have to go,” I told Mayowa. “Clean up duty calls.”

Mayowa’s fingers brushed mine slightly as she handed me her card. “I’ll be at the Royal Emblem Hotel for another day. You can come see me tomorrow if you like. We can hang out.” Her voice hinted excitement.

THE NEXT day I took a sick leave from work and made my way to the Royal Emblem. There, I was directed to Mayowa’s room and she opened the door to let me in. “I’ve been expecting you Zara,” she said with a smile. “Come in. Come in.” Her sweet, sour cologne wafted, filling my nostrils. I looked down to see her bathrobe. It hung open, revealing

part of her body. My pulse quickened.

“Do you want a drink?” she asked.

“No, thank you.” I tried to fix my eyes on something else.

“I’m so glad you came.”

“I...I...am glad you invited me.” This is certainly heading somewhere, I thought, wondering if I should sit on the bed or the sofa.

WE WERE talking about her boyfriend and how they met when Mayowa abruptly stopped and stood up, her face expressionless. My pulse beat rapidly as she beckoned on me with a crooked finger and began to take off her robe. I approached her and she pulled me closer and held my face in her hands. She reached for my limp hands and placed them around her small waist. How did she know that I wanted this to happen? Her tongue found mine willing to continue the game she had begun. She tasted minty. Her breasts pressed against mine and a moan escaped my lips. I felt more relaxed, wanting more and more of this woman. Mayowa took my right hand, licked my index and middle fingers and placed them in between her thighs. My fingers found her wetness and felt my own. Gentle thrusts made Mayowa whimper with pleasure, her hard nipples rubbing my face as I leaned closer. She wanted me to go faster and I did. I loved the sound of her voice as she moaned loudly, clutching my hand, her juices all over my fingers. She pulled out my fingers and began to take off my clothes. Dropping them in a

pile, she pushed me onto the bed and pulled my legs apart. Her eyes sparkled with unbridled passion. She was back to kissing me. Light fluttery kisses on my neck, my stomach, behind my ears. My body shuddered with every touch. She took a nipple in her mouth and sucked hard, sending tiny shocks throughout my body. Her middle finger found my pussy, teased it for a second and slid in. I moaned for more and she was pleased by this. I felt another finger go in, and then another until she was satisfied. Slowly, she moved them in and out and I quivered. My hands reached for her breasts and squeezed. She stopped using her fingers and applied her tongue, licking and sucking me toward the point of madness. She continued this while fingering herself. She stopped minutes later when she felt I was wet enough and from the bedside table, she brought out a massive dildo.

“Mayowa,” I murmured, staring at the toy, eager for it to be used on me.

“Relax baby and let me fuck you,” she said, licking the tip of the dildo, and bringing it closer to my clit. She rubbed and caressed me with it until I could take it no more. She turned me around so that my buttocks faced her directly. She sniffed it and purred hungrily. She slapped a cheek, inserted her tongue deep inside my pussy before she slid the dildo in. I gasped, clutching the sheets. Slowly at first, she fucked me and then faster and faster until I felt that sweet release wash all over me. “Your turn,” I said to her.

“My turn?” Mayowa asked, baffled.

I blinked. “What?”

I was not on the bed but on the lone sofa beside it, and I still had my clothes on.

Mayowa was alone on the bed, her bathrobe snugly tied.

“Sorry, I dozed off. So tired.”

“I know, right?” she replied, laughing as she stretched to unplug her phone from the wall outlet. “I was asking if you would like to have lunch with me and my boyfriend. He just flew in,” she said, swiping her phone’s screen. “Oh, he is going to laugh his socks off when he hears how we met.”

Biting my lip and ignoring the aching wetness pooling between my legs, I murmured, “Yes. Yes, of course.”

The Mulokole

Precious C. K.

HIM

GETTING CAUGHT as I watch is my biggest concern. I wrap my hands around the coffee cup and the heat makes my palms tingle. I lift it to my lips and the steam fogs up my glasses. Any one of the customers at Café Jemma's can glance my way and all they would see is a pretty woman, natural hair pulled back, wearing a long floral dress and either stirring her coffee in constant circles or frowning as she wipes steam off her glasses and puts them back on to concentrate on her book. What they wouldn't see or feel are my hooded eyes on them, watching their excited gesticulations as they chat, drink and enjoy the Kampala sunshine. I watch them to pass the time, hoping he comes.

Every lunch break, I walk the five minutes from my small windowless office at Redeemed Fellowship Church to Jemma's and sit at the same table on the balcony. My favourite day is Wednesday when he comes in for lunch. I've never had the courage to speak to him so I still don't know his name. All I know is watching how his suit grips the curves of his body in a way that I'm convinced is sinful but can't help staring at. I like the neat edges of his haircut, his sharp jaw, the laugh lines that frame his lips, and his hands. I always keep my face in my book, even as my eyes observe him take a seat, pick up his

glass of water and take slow gulps—Adam’s apple bulging until he empties the glass. In the afternoon heat I feel warmth that has nothing to do with the sun and, most times, I have to force myself to look away.

Every Wednesday he comes, and I watch. Later, back in my office staring at my computer as I try to write the devotionals for the coming month, I berate myself for being so weak. It is not just that I’m a grown woman in her thirties who should know better than to drool over unattainable men, but the fact that I’ve been a mulokole, born again for almost all my life and should have better self-control. Yet every week I wait for him to walk into the café in his suit. Walking out, he takes off his jacket sometimes, and leaves with it on his arm, butt high and firm as he disappears into the distance while I wonder what his skin would taste like if I put my tongue on him.

I always leave a minute after he’s gone.

THREE

I WAS late for the service that Sunday. There was a visiting preacher as usual and most of the girls who identified as Protestant, in an officially Catholic secondary school, were already seated under the tent reserved for our church services. The worship songs, my favourite part, had ended and the preacher had just started speaking. I should have stayed in the dorm reading my romance novel underneath my blanket. I’d almost reached the part where the tall, handsome English Duke was about to take the virginity of the Commoner blonde girl he’d rescued from a group of uncouth street lads about to rape

her. I already knew what happened between men and women because my mother had put a book under my pillow on my thirteenth birthday that explained the facts really well, but no one ever told me about the feelings. When I read about how his lips felt warm on her neck and how he pulled down her corset and nibbled on her nipples, I felt a sweet tingling in the bottom of my belly. As his lips moved further down her lush body, I caught myself gasping for breath along with her.

“Love is good,” Preacher Man shouted, “but it depends on the type of love.”

I sat up in my chair.

“Is it the type of love where the man and woman are fornicating—having sex before marriage?”

Like my Duke and Commoner?

“That kind of love is called Eros love because, as you know, the Greeks had three types of love.”

Really?

“Eros love is the one between a man and woman but this love is very perverted in the world today. You have to guard yourselves in this area and remain pure for your husbands.”

All the girls in the congregation were nodding in agreement. I wondered why that love which was evil seemed so good and pleasurable when one read about it.

“You have to seek Phileo love, that is, brotherly love for your brothers and sisters in Christ. Above all, you should seek Agape love which is the unconditional love of God, the love that He has for all of us sinners.”

The hallelujahs rang out and I sank low in my chair. I was definitely a sinner because I was always seeking after the novels that were full of Eros and I didn't even know what Agape was. Half an hour later, when the Preacher Man said that we were all sinners and needed to repent to be saved from our sins, I went up to be prayed for. The leaders of the fellowship, girls who were some classes above me, then told me that I was now born-again, and needed to put away all sinful things so as to be holy as my Father in heaven was holy.

All I could feel was relief. I was no longer going to hell and I could put the Duke and Commoner behind me forever. That night, I went to my dorm determined to return the book to its owner and tell her that I was now a mulokole and would not be reading those kinds of books again. I sat on my bed and looked at the cover. His shirt was unbuttoned, and his chest, which had sprinklings of hair, was the perfect resting place for her dainty hand as she leaned back, hair windswept and breasts overflowing from her bodice. I suddenly remembered our literature teacher saying that it was non-academic to leave a book unfinished once started and, besides, God understood that I wasn't doing anything as sinful as fornication...I was just reading a book and I was sure the couple would get married in the end. They always did.

LETTER

DEAR FATHER in Heaven, hallowed be Your name.

It wasn't my fault. It really wasn't.

It was Helen who told me that Nora Fontain had released a new book. Her mother brought it on Visiting Sunday and Helen said she knew I was a fast reader so I could have it first. I didn't want to say no because I was afraid she'd tell everyone that I was now "too spiritual." So I blame her. I also blame Nora Fontain because her books are not like the others in which the hot couple starts kissing and the chapter conveniently ends. She's the one who put those images in my head. Pictures of sweaty bodies; his muscular and hers soft, pressed against each other in the dark. I started to think a lot about those bodies while I was in class or walking to the latrines but especially at night when I lay alone in my bed.

I have to tell You what happened. I must confess.

It had rained all afternoon and most of the girls were napping after our early dinner. Now that I am a senior and have my own room, it is even harder not to fall into temptation. Under my blanket, I started to think about his lips nibbling her nipple. I wondered how it would feel. Nora Fontain made me think of his hand pushing my breast upward as he lowered his head and bit hard on my nipple. I used my fingers and pinched it hard through my school shirt. It felt like an electric shock running from my chest to my abdomen and settling between my legs. I wanted to stop but I couldn't help myself. I did it again, but this time I followed the electricity with my fingers. I couldn't control my legs

when they fell open nor could I stop my fingers from reaching down there, underneath my school skirt. I found the wet honey that Nora Fontain's women always have when the men are kissing and rubbing them all over. It was warm and sticky. I was about to move my hand when I felt the hard little nub, there at the centre of me, that I had only read about. I knew that if I rubbed it, I would feel something but I didn't know what exactly. I don't know whether it was curiosity or stupidity that made me put my fingers on it and press down hard, then round and round. The electricity spread sharply from beneath my fingers all the way down my legs, up my spine and into my brain. So much heat! Such intense tingling! I almost couldn't catch my breath and when I used my left hand to pinch my nipple while the other hand kept rubbing, the electricity doubled and I made a strange sound I had never made before. I didn't know how to stop or if I wanted to. I felt more honey flowing and my hips were moving to the beat of my fingers. I pinched and rubbed, harder and faster until the electricity became lightening and the lightening became a blast of sunshine exploding on my skin, inside it, and there, under my fingers, where the swollen nub pulsated over and over until, slowly, I felt the sun fade.

Maybe I am deceiving myself because Nora Fontain did not tell me to put my fingers down there. I don't know. All I can do is ask for Your forgiveness and promise that it will never ever happen again. I will return the book and never read another one again. I pray that You help me overcome my weaknesses

Your daughter,

Elizabeth.

BOX

UNDERNEATH MY single bed in the small flat I rent is a padlocked box made of dark wood. Every night, I open it and read my confessional letters. There are hundreds of them now since the Nora Fontain incident. I don't know why I keep writing. Maybe it is to remind myself of my faults or to convince myself not to fall into the same traps. I thought vowing to serve the Lord for the rest of my life and keeping out of relationships was punishment enough. I thought it would teach my body a strong lesson, to seek Agape and not Eros, but I am beginning to realise that maybe Eros is inside me and it is here to stay.

Tonight, I read my letters then my Bible. But as soon as I lie down, I think of him taking off his tailored suit and climbing into my bed, covering me with his warm body and kissing me better than any of the guys I've read about in books. All the while, my hands trace paths over my body till they come to rest between my legs and the honey gushes out, and the sun explodes on the inside like it always has. In the morning, I will write another letter, shower, and then go out to do the Lord's work.

My Father's Widow

Jerry Edo

IN MY community in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria, we practice widow inheritance. When a man dies, the elders of his family mandate one of his younger brothers, cousins or adult son from another woman to marry his widow and cater for her and her children. However, there is no compulsion in the practice. The widow may choose to remain single or leave the family to remarry elsewhere. Likewise, a man who is asked can decline the offer and the elders will look for another choice—subject to the widow's approval.

When my father died in 1996, I was barely 19 and fresh from technical school. I had no job and my immediate plan was to migrate to the city of Port Harcourt in search of a job. My father was 52 when he died, and was survived by two wives including my mother and eight children of which I was the eldest son. My father's surviving brother married my mother and, in the absence of any other brother or cousin willing to marry his younger wife, the mantle fell on me to marry her.

OTITI IS her name and she was 30 years old then. I declined to marry her, not on account of her age—which, by the way, is not an issue in our community—but because I had no wherewithal to cater for a wife. That much I told the elders' council when I was

summoned to appear before it. But Otiti wanted me. She was present when I made my submission to the elders and she countered that she was doing well as a petty trader and farmer and had the resources to cater for herself and her two toddlers until I got a job and was in a position to assist her. She added that she had found favour in my father's compound and, as such, not keen to leave the family. I pleaded for an adjournment to ponder over the issue and give the elders a definite response when they reconvened. But late in the evening that same day, I was in my hut preparing to go to bed when someone knocked on my door.

“Who’s there?” I asked

“It’s your wife, open the door.”

I recognized Otiti’s voice and got up to open the door.

She was standing there in the semidarkness and as the door swung open, she glanced around furtively before facing me. She had a white scarf on her head and a one-piece wrapper tied around her chest that reached her knees. “Good evening,” I greeted, breaking the silence.

“Let me in,” she urged, and I stepped aside to let her into my hut.

I closed the door behind us then turned to face her. She was a petite woman and I towered over her. For a brief, awkward moment we stared at each other—she looking up at me and me glaring down at her blankly.

“Won’t you ask me to sit down?”

“Of course. Sit down,” I urged her as I sat on my bed and motioned to her to sit beside me.

My wooden bed was the only piece of furniture in the room and it was more than a bed. I ate my food, read my books, did my assignment there, and whenever I had visitors, they sat on it with me. Otiti sat close to me on the bed and I could perceive the sweet, familiar fragrance of kernel oil. She glanced around my hut, peering with interest at the huge posters of Michael Jackson and Arnold Schwarzenegger. My father built the hut for me when I turned sixteen and I wasn't sure if Otiti had been inside it before or not.

“Is anything amiss?” I asked her politely.

“Amiss?” she asked, turning to me. “What is amiss?”

“Nothing. I... I was wondering why ermmm...”

“I came to see you?”

“Yes.”

She chuckled, smacked my lap lightly and said, “My farm is overgrown with weed. As my husband, you have to weed it.”

“Your farm? Which of them, the one near Okpaivie market?”

“No.”

“Is it the one at Okpesia?”

“Grow up, Ubi!” She yelled and smacked me hard on my laps and laughed.

“You’re a man now – a married man. I don’t need to...”

“I’m not married yet,” I protested. “When did I marry?”

“You’re married to me, Ubi. I’m your first and only wife for now. Don’t deny me.”

“We’re not yet married, Otit. You heard what I told the elders today. I have not made up my mind. I still need to...”

“I know your answer will be yes, so I regard you as my husband already.”

“You know my answer will be yes? How did you know that?”

“Because I can feel it here,” she said, touching her bosom.

“What if I say no?” I asked, frowning.

“No you won’t, I know you.”

“Really? How?”

She paused for a while before she spoke.

“Look at me,” she nudged me gently. “There’s something I want to show you.”

I looked, and as I did, she untied the knot of wrapper under her armpit and it fell downward, her breasts popping out. I stared in disbelief at her naked breasts. They were not of ample proportions, but the nipples, each of them probably up to an inch in

length, stood out defiantly as if daring me to touch them. My heartbeat quickened as my manhood stirred under my loincloth. Otiti nudged me again, shook her torso and her breasts jiggled. “This is the road to my farm,” she told me proudly, pointing at her breasts.

My manhood kicked and pushed hard on my loincloth. I was tempted to reach for the exposed breasts, yet timidity stayed me.

Otiti spotted this, reached for my right hand and placed it on her right breast. “It’s all yours. Play with it,” she whispered in my ears.

I took liberty of the offer and crushed the supple flesh in my palm.

“Gently,” she cautioned, and then eased my hand from the breast, showing me how she wanted it to be handled.

I took a cue and caressed her lightly but from time to time, tweaked her engorged nipples hard between my fingers.

She moaned, then whispered, “Suck my breasts. Put this nipple in your mouth and suck it but continue to touch the other one.”

“Yes,” I whispered, and did as she instructed.

The moment I clamped my lips on her engorged nipple and suckled, she let out a loud moan. The harder I sucked, the louder she moaned and wriggled her body. She grabbed my manhood at some point and began to stroke it. Soon, she yanked the loincloth from my waist and I was completely naked.

“You have a good machete,” she said with a smile as she paused to stare at my exposed manhood. “Exactly what I expected, big and strong enough to weed my farm.”

Not knowing what to tell her, I resumed what I was doing, caressing one of the breasts and suckling the other. Her hand went back to my manhood as she stroked and caressed it with light fingers that made me moan as well.

“My farm is so wet now,” she whispered in my ear after a couple of minutes. She took one of my hands, guided it under her legs and asked me to feel it.

My hand felt her bristle pubic hair at first, but as she pushed it downward, I encountered her soggy presence and my fingers instantly got coated in her secretions. She eased out my hand and urged me to stand up. I did as she asked, my manhood throbbing ceaselessly. She got up as well and went to where my kerosene lamp was and put out the light. My hut was thrown into darkness but I could discern where she was and what she was doing. She grabbed me and we both lay on my bed.

When we hit the bed, I climbed on her and moved to put my throbbing manhood into her but she stopped me. She pushed my head on her bosom instead and made me suckle her nipples again. And as I did that, she reached for my engorged manhood and caressed it with spidery touches that really excited me. From time to time, she would push the tip on her wet entrance and rub it around, teasing. When I lowered my waist and tried to push into her, she would stop and move my manhood aside and continue to caress it. I was no stranger to copulation. I had been to bed a few times with girls of my age but those encounters were straightforward activities of getting naked,

lying down and pressing my manhood around their genitals till I gained entrance into them. I therefore found the slow, unhurried methodology Otiti was taking me through as novel. I was tensed up and raring to explode but she kept teasing. Eventually, she started pushing my manhood into her wet, warm orifice. At first, I thought it was another tease but she kept at it longer and I pressed hard into her, impaling more of my shaft into her. She spread her legs wide apart, raised them and urged me to plunge deeper which I did rather forcefully. She squealed, but urged me on and wrapped her legs around my waist as I began thrusting in and out of her savagely. She was so wet and slippery down there—much more than anything I had encountered in my erstwhile trysts. She complemented every of my downward thrusts with upward thrusts that were so well synchronized and kept me delicately ensnarled inside her.

As I coasted to an inevitable climax, she held on to me tighter and asked, “You’ll marry me, won’t you?”

“Y-ye-yesss,” I blurted, and exploded, expelling my semen into her.

Two weeks later, Otiti and I were married by the family elders. No formal ceremony took place other than pronouncing us husband and wife since it was not a new marriage in the eyes of tradition, but the continuation of an existing one. Much later, I married a second wife who today lives with me in Port Harcourt where I also work. Otiti remains my first wife and I travel to my community fortnightly to weed her farm, and perform any other activity expected of me as her husband and father of her children who are also my half-brothers.

The Hourglass Gallery

Shammah Godoꝝ

TO THIS day, I would argue that the city of Lagos has the best art galleries anywhere. Lagos is where the whole of Africa brings art to display. It was not my first time at The Hourglass Gallery but every visit always felt new. I had a ritual of going into the gallery first to breath its air, before heading out to the bar next door for a glass of gin and vodka, and then returning to join the throng that usually contained students, writers and, generally, people with little or no taste in art. I mean, most people visit galleries because they need a place to go, while some visit to find connections and galleries are often accessible. In the galleries they could be found doing something else, but not me. You can say I have a deep passion for art. Art is life to me and I follow every new movement down to its source.

Re-entering The Hourglass Gallery, I noticed that two pieces out of the old display had not been sold and that there were some newly crafted ones by Makaye. Why did he pick that name? Ma-ka-ye. He was the host of the exhibition and his collection stood at the centre, easily allowing the world to revolve around him. It must have been on purpose. Nanshak Martin, known as Makaye in art circles, was one of those artists whom you never quite figured out what they could not do. He could draw, paint, sculpt, and there was no finer potter than he was. He was rumoured to have moulded a set of

dishes auctioned for \$500,000.

God knows I did not believe it, but Makaye was excellent at what he did best which was terracotta. I stood before one of his exhibits and noted that while he maintained the recognizable features of the art, there were little carvings that created a visual trick which gave the deep-orange clay head a higher definition, making it look more alive. He would explain to me later that he spent time with a needle, syringe and an oil mixture creating this effect in the way a computer makes a picture out of pixels. Then, I would be bent over in front of him and his prick would be pushing slowly into my ass and thoughts of the interview and review of the exhibition I was supposed to write would flash through my mind, but only for a brief second.

Now, I just stood staring and wondering how Makaye had created something like this.

“You like it, eh?”

“I do. There’s a way it catches the light.”

“Visuals are all about light; what the object gives back to us after meeting with light. What it reflects is what it is worth. In the end, you are *worth* what you give.”

“Is that supposed to be a pun or something?” I turned to finally see the speaker. It was Makaye. He was even darker up close, but then, like his art, different shades of light did things to his skin, and I had an eye for such nuances and things.

“Your wit is amazing,” he mused, stepping forward. “And...you are too close.”

I looked down and realized I had crossed the viewing line drawn to keep visitors away from the exhibits. I apologized.

“You’re welcome.” He stepped into the half circle and looked around to ascertain if changes had been made. When he exhaled in what could be relief, I walked away. I went to the bar to get another drink. The bar had amazing glass work and reflective surfaces and I examined myself in them: hair cut so low, high cheekbones, makeup-free face, slightly big eyes that blinked a lot, a habit which had seemed cool when I was a child, but now just made it seem like I had an eye problem. I couldn’t even fix faux-lashes because they would fall off with the motions. A slight frame that made people assume I was an undergraduate. My possessions included a phone and, at the back of its case, my ID and ATM cards, zipped. I do not like to carry too much material and that did not help me look older. A lady with a handbag has her age notched up three years.

Makaye came into the bar but he did not pull up a chair to sit down. He acted instead like someone inspecting property, while I sipped my drink with a straw.

“Excuse me. Hey.”

I was watching him from the corner of my eye. “Hi.”

“You came for the exhibition, no? Do you want to make some extra money?”

I had not even answered the first question, but he continued, “It is fine if you don’t want to. I mean, you actually came here to see the exhibition but my assistant is running late and I think you can fill in nicely for her. Just a thought. What do you say?”

I saw Makaye as the sort of man used to never being said no to, which was weird because he was not the burly sort. He was clean shaven, of average height and had average looks which would not warrant notice in a room full of people. All I am saying is that, with his looks, Makaye was not supposed to have the confidence that he exuded. But he did, and that influenced my decision to assist him.

“Well, whatever. I will help out.”

“Good,” he fished in his wallet and slapped some cash before the bartender. He said that he was expecting me in five minutes. I stretched out time and enjoyed my drink before I walked back into The Hourglass, ready to be an exhibition assistant. I had an idea what I was to do anyway.

“All you need to do is stand here and look pretty. There is not much you can do. Have you ever worked as an exhibition assistant before? No. You need a degree in the history of art and then communication skills and a lot of other peripherals. Today you’ll just do some clerical work. Handle the payments receipts and whatnots. You do not have to stay till the end of it but, to be honest, I would want you to stay until we finish.”

As he talked, I wondered when he would ask a question and actually wait for me to answer even if he knew what I was going to say. When the exhibition opened, I had no time to think about small things. I was by the corner, registering the paintings that were purchased while he doubled back and forth, giving directions for handling and packaging of the art. Some of them he said he was going to deliver later, especially the big or valuable ones. He was all teeth throughout the exhibition, but I got to know that

his assistant was named Felicity, after he had called me by her name thrice.

He paid me and asked me to leave when the exhibition ended, but I refused. “I would like to see this to the end,” I replied, gesturing at the exhibition area.

Makaye had hung his head and given me a look that made me shudder a little. Then he said, “Let us see this to the end then.” We covered the paintings, some with cotton sheets and others with some lighter material that he said allowed air permeate. It was nearly one in the morning when we finished. He was going to call a cab for me but I said it was too late. “This is Abuja. It is never too late for cabs,” he said.

“Karu, Nassarawa State is that late enough for you?”

“You came all the way from there?” Shock streaked across his face. “Well, I don’t...look, you can stay in the gallery’s guest room with me, but I cannot guarantee not sleeping with you. I think I would most definitely sleep with you.”

I made a small sound in my throat which may have been shock or disapproval.

“Don’t you think it is better to say it straight? Plus, I think you would refuse anyway. I know how to read people. So what is it going to be?”

Under the light, I studied him and decided then that I was going to fuck him. I didn’t think I needed any deeper reason other than the fact that I could.

“Where is the gallery’s guestroom?”

He smirked. “Upstairs, come.”

Upstairs was a large room with a small space for a bathroom at one corner. There was a half-made bed in the middle of the room. He put his bag down and took off his denim shirt, leaving the white T-shirt underneath. He walked to the fridge and took out a bottle of water, two glasses and an ice rack. I was still standing by the door when he came over and gave me one of the glasses. I drank, and in his empty glass he popped the ice cubes and put it by the bed. I came over and slipped a hand under his shirt. He was easy to touch, like a little boy, and there was something slightly maternal amidst the headiness that crept into my system when we started kissing. There was ice in his mouth and we passed it back and forth as we kissed.

It did not take long for the two of us to get naked. There was no extra drama about it. He moved his mouth to my vagina and started to eat it. He did this expertly and his lips felt cold and I could feel myself heat up from the inside. I watched his head bob up and down and then he reached for the ice, rolled it around my nipples which hardened more than I deemed capable. And then there was ice in my navel and ice in his mouth that he used to tease my clit. When it melted, he took a fresh cube and stuck it inside me. The shocking cold and soothing warmth of pleasure left me trembling with need. He pushed inside me and with every thrust, the ice-cube slid deeper and I started thinking all different kinds of things. I watched him watch me till he turned me over and thrust slowly into me, as though he was waiting for something. He must have grown tired of waiting for that something because he did what he should have done since—ploughed in all the way. Between us, we melted the ice with the heat of us and water flowed out of my insides long before I came. His thrusts were almost violent but rhythmic, and I cried

and clenched my teeth at the feeling which was different, but so good. I had a thorough orgasm.

We had sex twice after that, but I wouldn't let him put ice cubes inside me anymore and during those two times I didn't come. I didn't even want to. We also talked when we were not fucking, about his life, his art, and how *The Shere Review* critic was absent at the exhibition. I asked him a lot of questions and paid attention to his answers. At dawn I slipped on my jeans and left him sleeping, slipping out of the gallery through the back door just as the cleaners were coming in. I began the walk of shame to my hotel in Wuse, about ten minutes away from the Hourglass Gallery.

MY EDITOR called at 7 a.m.

I had still been unable to fall asleep.

"What do you mean you did not get the interview? Did you not talk to Makaye?"

"Of course we talked, but I don't have an interview. Let's just do a feature on him from an anonymous point of view. I think that is a more creative angle."

"I'm not comfortable with the change of plans, but I trust you more than I'm uncomfortable. Make it ready quickly."

"I will mail a draft to you in the evening. We can even print it as anonymous."

"Anonymous is not a writer at *The Shere Review*, stop playing."

I laughed. "I just had a good time yesterday. Let me work."

I sat before my laptop and while waiting for the booting process slid a finger into my vagina. I found that I was still sore, but when I recalled his prick pushing the ice cube further in, I realised he had given me an orgasm I would not be quick to forget.

How Do You Feel?

Hussani Abdulrahim

How do you taste?

My tongue's a most sensitive
spectroscope

burrowing from bud to bud, crest to
crest,

where the amplitude is the seconds I
munch

travelling from the spur of one nipple to
the other.

How do you feel?

When I peel,

Peel off the scabs of trepidation
burning your body,

With kisses that bring heaven into hazy
focus

Tiptoeing on the terraces of your skin,

Tracing the pivot where lies a palpitating
sensor.

Do you feel your body dissolving into
water?

How can I make you fly?

Should I slip in where your slippery lips

Form a shadowy vortex with night,

Or further, nether, nether, nether

Where the tips of my fingers culminates

a marathon;

and you sail towards a fixed point,

breathless.

Let me make you cross heaven,

As we merge, losing selves.

Moving

Alithnayn Abdulkareem

EVERYTHING IS gone except a mattress and you. The movers came yesterday and took the rest of the things. The mattress is the only other solid thing in the house. Me and a mattress and you, but you're not really here. You are on the walls, places you drew stick figures and signed on. You are sealed inside the foam, your lemon and lavender scent and the coconut oil in your hair. The dents made from your body pressing down on the foam from all those afternoons we watched movies together, or you watched me write, or I loosened your braids. Or the times your knees pushed down so hard when your ass was up and my tongue was licking the pink flower between your spread legs, one finger—two fingers following my tongue.

I close my eyes and press my head into a dent. I can imagine your scream if I'm still and silent enough. I tried to find it last night with that girl from Tinder. She had the same haircut you wore in the last weeks we saw each other. She also laughed like you: that *tsttstst* sound. When I brought her home, I thought she would gasp the way you did when I removed her panties, rubbed my palms together and covered her with them. She didn't moan like you, she didn't scream when she came, she just muttered, *fuck...ah...fuck. Jesus.*

My phone vibrates. My date is on her way to me. I get up, lift the mattress and push it against the wall. I go to the bathroom to wash my face. In the mirror I can't decide whether to leave my hair down or bunch them in the bow that attracts so much attention. I almost turn to ask you, and it hits me, again. You're not here. You left. I leave it down and leave the house. The bar is a ten minute walk.

A FEW minutes and a few shots in, I can convince myself I have left the country and somehow apparated into Britain. Even the playlist at the bar doesn't conceive that an era exists beyond the '90s. Its patrons are rounded white men, with orange faces, who are always on hand to share a cigarette or a lighter. Most of the glasses are filled with foam and amber. Liquor is available, but beer is the culture. The posters all carry faces of dead British talent. Churchill, Freddie Mercury. I take my usual seat and the bartender spots me. He waves and slides a bottle of whiskey and a shot glass in my direction.

After some time, whiskey stops tasting like fire but I don't stop swallowing. I reach instead for my cigarette and light one. The mint enhances the heat on my tongue. I consider for a second if the smoke going into me might spark against my soaked organs and burn me from the inside. Maybe burn the you inside me, between my legs, behind my eyelids. Burn the Donli that shows up whenever I switch sight for darkness. Smiling Donli, eyes like small, black pebbles I never seem to stop stepping over. Pebbles responsible for the calluses under my skin. That's what all the whiskey is for. So the wounds don't grow and I start bleeding out my eyes and ears.

THE BOTTLE is almost empty. Now all I can taste is mint, and something from the whiskey I cannot identify. I sit up to scan the bar. I have my contacts on, but my view is a distorted one. There are swathes of colours, clothes and light bulbs and skin tones, chopped conversation to accompany the cold cocktails. I toss my card to the bartender and slide off my chair.

“Savings, 1990.”

He doesn't have a tag. Brown arms work the POS machine. They have little black hairs on them. His fingers are elegant twigs and his nails are manicured. They remind me of yours and I hate that I still touch myself to the memory of your twigs inside my pink.

In the bathroom my date texts: *I'm here*. The toilet takes all my whiskey back. I wash my hands and on scanning my face, I douse it in water too. I don't think you'd recognize me, Donli. You took everything soft out of me. I have cheekbones and collarbones now. I had to stop wearing glasses, because all the crying seemed to make my eyes enter my face even worse than the glasses did. You might pass me on the street if we ever meet again. There is nothing of the girl you used to love, with a round face and auburn locs and ink stains on her hands.

THE BAR is still a swath of skin and fabric when I climb back on my stool. The whiskey gone, hunger surfaces. I order a plate of fries and turn around to scan for my date. She's in a corner booth. I wave and she approaches, a black dress with clean lines and a weave falling in waves. She smells good, skin like fresh bananas. We kiss each other's cheeks.

Her name is Toluwani.

“Cigarette?” I offer.

“Please.”

I drop the pack between us, “What’s mine is yours.”

She takes out one and I lean in with a lighter. Under the fire I see her pupils are hazel. Yours are black, Donli.

My fries arrive and I push the plate between us. We reach for it at the same time and our fingers prod themselves. She has coffee-coloured digits with blue polish. I close my eyes and inhale at the rush of sweetness between my legs. I take a fry and play with it as I let her eat and talk. Toluwani moved from Nigeria at six, communications manager for a start-up. Saucer eyes, collarbones with coffee mounds straining her top; one nipple is alert so her chest looks like eyes. One chaste, the other blinking promises. She bites her lower lip a lot. She orders a gin and tonic. She wants me to talk about myself.

“I write and paint,” I say.

“That’s so cool,” she says.

I laugh and shake my head. Her eyes shift to my chest. We reach for fries at the same time again. She doesn’t move her hand but lifts her eyes to fix them on mine.

“So what are your plans for the night?” she asks.

“Nothing. I’m moving tomorrow, so I’m just going to head home, rewatch a

movie on my Tablet and then, sleep.”

“Which one?”

“Wong Kar-Wai, *Chungking Express*.”

“I’ve never heard of him.”

“He’s Chinese, very arthouse.” I finish my drink. “I can’t guarantee you’d like the movie, but I don’t live far.”

“Try me,” she says.

I nod and get down from the stool. She pays for the fries and our drinks. I enjoy watching her take charge. I’m so used to being the lead, it feels nice to be wooed like this. She drove here, so we head to her car. It smells like lemon. We don’t play music or say anything till we arrive. In the house, I connect the phone to a wall socket above the mattress and click play. We lie on the mattress and watch.

“I’m sorry I have nothing to offer you,” I say. “Maybe I should go and buy takeout?”

“It’s okay.” She moves closer.

The movie hasn’t gone far at all. It is just that scene where the boy goes to buy pineapples. There’s the voiceover. A hand presses over mine.

I guess this is a kind of voiceover, Donli: me giving you exposition in your absence. I turn to face Toluwani. I touch her cheeks and brush her bottom lip with my

thumb. I kiss her and she's soft. The rest of her against my hands, soft too.

"You're so soft," I tell her.

She giggles, and removes her top. My lips leave hers and travel. She sounds like you, Donli. I keep exploring, wondering if she has the same three birthmarks you have across your breasts. She has one above her navel, and she laughs when my tongue brushes it. I lift her skirt and put my face under it, and inhale for a second. Musk and lemon. You are lemon and lavender, Donli, but under here, she sounds as if I were under you. I flex my hand and place my palm over the hottest part of her, my thumb on her nub, rubbing and pressing. Slide panties to the side, one finger, two fingers inside the slickness of her.

A hand reaches for my head and another lifts the skirt. I inhale the fresh air.

"What's your real name?" she asks. My Tinder account just says Girl X.

"Azeenah. Why?"

"I couldn't figure out what to call you."

I nod and go back to her salty insides; my tongue now completing the trifecta of prodding, rubbing and licking. She's moaning, *Zena*, exactly like you. I close my eyes to focus and there you are behind my lids, echoing my name just like her. It doesn't take long before she tightens around my fingers inside her and jerks. I come back up to her coffee mounds, both nipples now wide open eyes staring confidently at my mouth. I acquiesce. Her hands reach for my face and smoky eyes look back at me. She lifts me off

and gets on top.

“Let me,” she says. “What do you want?”

I want to forget you, Donli. I flip her till she’s back under. “No. Let me,” I say, and return my mouth to her.

She’s working, Donli. I’m working you out of me and putting the rest of you in me inside her. When I bite her and she shouts before laughing, it’s you I’m punishing. When we sit up and wrap our legs and pinks around each other, every burst of sweetness erupting in me is a goodbye song to you. She slides faster and I borrow some of her sighs. We’re both moaning and slapping our wet pussies together. I close my eyes and you’re there, but there’s a light coming from the corners, getting brighter as my moans get louder. “Fuck!” I scream and the light blinds and washes you out of my head. When everything recedes, you’re gone. Sound returns to my ears and I pick up a song: the movie is still playing.

Toluwani laughs and I hear her flop on the bed. I open my eyes. I close them again to be sure, but you’re gone. I open them. I don’t feel lighter. I feel the opposite. Toluwani stands to get dressed.

“Good movie,” she says. She takes a card from her bag and leaves it on the bed. I blow her a kiss as she leaves.

I TURN back to my phone. It is almost the movie’s end: the scene where the police

officer, waiting at the restaurant for his date, is told she has left the country and won't be coming back. I don't know when I start hiccupping or when the hiccups soften into tears. I curl on the bed and soak it in the salt and water leaving me. This was our house, Donli. After today, there will be nothing of you with me, on me. You've left my head like you left our house. Tomorrow, I'm leaving the traces of you in the walls and soil. I sob till my stomach hurts and the film ends. I'm horny again, so I take my hands and stroke and tap, replaying the past few hours. I replay the last time with you, too. I can't tell whose sighs are whose, can't tell the difference between memories and dreams of you and me, or of all the girls who look like you. I rub and slide to all of them, till a fat heave squeezes out of me and I stop. Then, I close my eyes and don't open them till my alarm beeps.

For the first time since you left me, I awake to pure silence. The walls don't emit your voice, and my dreams were clear water, no trace of you.

Last Night in Oba

Kaodilichi Ogamba

THE WEATHER was steely as Danna strolled through the narrow streets with no destination in mind. It was her last night in the tiny town of Oba. When she was first sent here from Port Harcourt, she had found the transfer unfavourable. As opposed to Port Harcourt, there were no cinemas or shopping malls. Only thin streets filled with plantain trees and small shops. Yet, now, she felt nostalgic leaving behind the boredom she had known for eighteen months.

The company, MTA Shipping, needed someone knowledgeable in the customer service department at the Port Harcourt branch, and she had been promised a raise, too. Now she was reluctant to leave, having fallen in love with Oba, her solitude and clean air. She reached a crossroad from where the Niger River could be viewed, and she hovered there for few minutes. The river looked like an endless curtain of blue in the distance, and was one of the reasons she loved this town that mirrored places.

On her way home, she plied the major road. Head lights from vehicles and motorcycles guided her path until she reached the popular Wine and Dine, a restaurant that ran a night club alongside a bar where civil workers in the town preferred to hang

out.

“Adanna!” It was Suzy, she knew, the only girl who had refused to acknowledge the short version of her name.

“Hey Suzy!”

Suzy worked in the only bank in the town. Naturally, MTA Shipping staff were friendly with the bankers and they usually hung out together. The bar brimmed with energy and excitement as the young men and women prattled aloud, moving through diverse topics, from politics to religion to business. Suzy’s table had about seven people, five men and two ladies. She waved and then settled into a chair.

“Meet Ad—I mean Danna,” Suzy began, winking at Danna.

Danna waved and her eyes scanned the table, a smile stuck on her face. When her eyes alighted on the man nearest to her, her hand dropped. She knew him, but the man’s eyes registered no recognition as he barely lifted his gaze from his phone. The man was Mike, the new finance manager for the branch of MTA Shipping at Oba. He was part of the reshuffled staff that had come in the week before, and girls at the firm whispered endlessly about him. When Danna saw him, she was equally struck by him. Mike wasn’t a very handsome man, if assessed by his face, but his defined abs and sleek beard indicated that he took his body seriously. Thankfully, there had been no orientation yet, so she could get away with pretending that she hadn’t seen him before.

“So... Suzy says you are with MTA Shipping?”

Danna heard the whispered question but laughed at something one of the guys said before turning to look at Mike. His head was lowered so that his breath was almost fanning her face. She tried hard to ignore the dirty thoughts his nearness was evoking in her.

“Yes, but I have been transferred. I leave for Port Harcourt tomorrow.”

“Ouch!” he exclaimed. “That’s sad. Let me buy you a farewell drink then.” He smiled sweetly, revealing perfect dentition and lips reddened by wine.

“Thanks, but this one will do.”

“Okay. A farewell dinner then,” he suggested, laughing. The sound of his laughter warmed Danna’s insides.

HE WAS talking about industrialization, how African countries should take cues from countries like Japan, China and Singapore. His argument was so rich and, as he spoke, Danna’s eyes were fixed on him, on his red lips which she imagined on her warm clit. She shuddered at the thought and fought hard to keep the tremor running through her body invisible. She stopped hearing him as her imaginations got the better of her. She only nodded when the others did and chuckled when they laughed. The discussion must have faded away because he turned his attention back on her, offering her wine from his glass. Under the shelter of the table, as they chatted about their personal interests, he placed his hand on her lap and kneaded. His touch ignited a fire that coursed through the thin

fabric of her trousers to her skin. His hand moved upwards and stopped at the spot beneath her trouser fly. He rubbed against her crotch, and her pussy raged, clenching and tightening. She grabbed the chair to steady herself but no one noticed anything; if they did, none showed it. They both tried to appear normal, Mike still drank his wine with his free hand, and his other hand appeared to be on his lap. Danna's two hands held onto her bottle of Malt and she took a sip every now and then, but her insides were on fire. Mike stroked her continuously, yet so discreetly his arm didn't shake with the effort. Then he stopped suddenly and Danna thought she was going to die from want.

"Danna," his voice was a coarse whisper. "We could go home and... and chat a little." His eyes were bloodshot; the hue of desire clouding them.

Some of their friends at the bar were going home too. Suzy was leaving because she had a shitload of account-opening problems to sort. Mike signalled the waiter, paid for their drinks and they walked to the parking lot. When they got in the car, Danna wished she could squash her lips against his, but he was already talking about other interests and it felt as if nothing had happened at the bar some minutes ago. Alongside her disappointment, reasoning returned alongside doubts. She hadn't had sex since she came to Oba and didn't know if she wanted to end that celibacy streak on her very last night. She wondered too whether Mike was the type to kiss and tell, and if it would be difficult to keep working with him after sleeping with him, but she shrugged the thoughts off and sighed.

"Hey babe, did I say something that didn't appeal to you?" he asked, steering the

car into the road with one hand as the other began drawing circles on her neck with the tip of his fingers. A big smile suffused her face as his question cast away her worries and she focused on the moment.

HIS HOUSE was a lavishly decorated two-room flat provided by the company for its most senior staff. For a thin moment, she wondered if he had a family somewhere, a wife perhaps, but his next comment reassured her.

“Sorry, if you do not find the house neat enough. This is the life of a working bachelor.” He laughed and she joined him, somewhat relieved, although she realized it was not really specific.

He motioned her to sit and disappeared into the interior of the house. He reappeared seconds later sporting only his boxers. His chest was densely haired and Danna imagined the hairs against her boobs and her nipples tightened. He sat beside her and then drew her onto his laps, her back resting against his chest. Before she could contemplate his next move, she felt his tongue tip at the edges of her right earlobe. The act sent electricity and laughter through her body and she squirmed, but Mike’s strong arms were holding her down and in place. His tongue moved into her ear and drew circles on the walls of her ear first before properly delving in. Danna was stunned yet aroused. She had never been fucked in the ear before. Her grunts of pleasure heightened and she began to gyrate against him, rubbing her ass against his erection. When he bit and took the other earlobe into his mouth, she exploded with pleasure, and her juices

rained down the walls of her pussy.

He made her stand in the middle of the living room and, in frenzied movements, peeled off her blouse and trousers. He also got rid of his boxers. When he unhooked her bra, her nipples hardened, protesting exposure. He bit the hard nipples gently, sucking on one a little greedily, while his free hand smothered the other. He quickly moved past them as though they were not his ultimate focus. He trailed kisses along her sternum, all over her stomach, and on each spot he spent time exploring and licking. He brought his head further down and ran his tongue on her swollen clit and her juices flowed steadily, smearing his face and beard. He licked her off and, inserting his tongue into her pussy, fucked her until her legs quivered beneath her and couldn't hold her up anymore.

"Is there anything specific you like?" Mike croaked in her ear when he stood up.

She couldn't articulate words. She liked everything he was doing to her, but her pussy craved badly to be filled up by his cock so she wriggled against him. He made her kneel on the rug, on fours. The cold air from the air conditioner wafted across the room, igniting a desperate need in her. Mike knelt behind her and rubbed her clit with two of his fingers before inserting them into the warmth of her cunt and proceeded to rotate his fingers in a torturously slow manner.

"Please!" she heard herself screaming, begging for less and more at the same time. She doubted if her body could contain such pleasures without failing itself. His fingers began to go faster and she crumbled to the floor, her arms too weak to remain steady. She trembled and moaned as Mike reached for her and cuddled her, his lips

descending onto hers, his tongue invading her mouth and claiming what remained of her. By the time the kiss ended, Mike's penis was oozing pre-cum and Danna wanted to take him in her mouth and drink it all up but Mike repositioned her again and she hoped that this time, she was going to be filled up by him. She opened her mouth to speak and she felt the force of his entry. He slid in from behind and went all the way to her insides causing her to squeal in delight. He moved slowly at first, and then increased the rhythm, rocking her hard and fast while his balls slapped against her swollen clit. He rubbed her tailbone and her excitement skyrocketed. He certainly knew what to do with his tongue and cock and hands. He pulled out again and she almost wept with impatience.

"I want to look into your eyes when you come," he told her as he turned her around to face him. Her body was quivering and tears brimmed in her eyes. He tore open a sachet of condom and rolled it on his erect penis. Then he placed her against the cool leather of the couch, raised her legs up and steadied them with his hands. There was no gentleness this time when he slammed into her. He shoved all of him into her and fucked her with the impatience of desire. She rode her hips back and forth to meet his thrusts until her nerves frayed and her brain stopped momentarily. She sailed past earthly borders and glimpsed heavenly bodies, stars in procession exploded on her face and it was too much beauty and sweetness. Her body trembled as she screamed and cried and came. Mike exploded right after her, and his trembling body went from rigid to limp, and he collapsed on top of her. He then rolled his weight off her and hugged her close, kissed her lips and her forehead. Being far too spent to speak, she only smiled contentedly and angled her body to fit his.

Touch

Raphael d'Abdon

insomnia has me by the balls
and blankets and thoughts
are just too hot
for this windless night,
but i can't get burnt by fantasies.
massaging strokes of memories
over the flagpole of my insomnia,
i touch myself and he comes alive,
limp lazarus from the grave of thoughts,
in which we recall bodies:

valeria, who didn't allow me come
anywhere else but in her mouth;

sharon who came to the bar, pushed my
beer away, put her panties in my hands
and asked: *can you feel how soaked it is?*

raul, who sniffed coke over my nipples
in a restroom, in-between salty tequila
shots and even saltier cumshots;

the tittering silicon tits of grace, aged 38
when i was 20, mother of a son two
years older than me;

donia, who used to scream *spoil me! spoil
me!* every time I licked her oversensitive
clit;

eleonora, who, under a full moon, softly
asked me, *can i kiss you?* and then
blushed, such a virgin;

gloria who, while in a 69 position, asked
me to piss on her, and when i refused,
told me to fuck off;

julia and jerusalem and their hairless
pubes, their shaven heaven;

johanna, who got me drunk after
pouring a bottle of amarula over her
statuesque nakedness;

pernilla, who begged me, *don't stop
now...pleasepleaseplease* and then, in the
afterlove, over a smoke, complained
about the loss of her dignity;

that lovely blond girl whose name i
never got to know, who gave me the
wettest kiss of my life, at the cures
concert, while dancing under the rain;

alexandra who, after a nice home-
cooked dinner, a rented dvd, some
spliffs, a few bottles of red wine and an
epic one night stand, told me she
wanted to have a baby by me;

clever susan and smart amanda and their
memorable set up which paved the way
to an equally memorable threesome;

federica, when the bed's leg got broken
during a ravenous in-and-out, i fell on
the floor, hit my head against the wall,
and saw her laughing at me;

deborah, and how we almost fainted
after fucking in the sauna, and how loud
we laughed afterwards, underneath an
ice-cold shower;

tania and i making love in her car, over
the notes of tina turner's "steamy
windows";

tina and i, fucking in a deserted church
and

being so goddamned sexy that even the
saints and angels on the frescoes,
inspired, started an orgy, and jesus
himself winked at us from his cross.

When i touch myself,
in bleak stillness of lonely night,
i reconnect with bodies of past loves.
though they may be figments,
my body remembers them,
and hand running over flagpole
of memory and blood,
I come, again and again,
spilling seed, and names of lovers long
gone.

Chocolate Cake

Filemon Iiyambo

“SO WHAT’S he like?” my friend, Selma, asks. I pull my phone out of my handbag, and I show her a picture of him.

“Mhhmmm! You lucky girl!” she exclaims, winking at me. “He’s a catch. That smile makes me want to swallow him. Does he fuck as well as he smiles?” I roll my eyes at her. Fifteen years of friendship and trying to teach her the art of subtlety, and she still doesn’t filter her words. She orders cake.

She asks again, “So, what’s he like?”

“Tall, slender, a bit bony in places...” I am halfway through my sentence when Selma stops me. She shushes me with her hand.

“I mean, what is he like as a person?” The interrogation continues as Selma is clearly bent on extricating all the information. Our cake arrives.

I reply, in a combination of Nerdish and not quite the right phrase. “Well, he’s really sweet. He’s smart, speaks good grammar, and is always very calm.” I pause, trying to re-situate myself in the conversation. “Did I mention that he’s really sweet?”

“So he’s like Chocolate Cake?” Selma takes a big bite of her cake. “So good, that too much is of it is bad.”

“Yes,” I reply. “He’s like Chocolate Cake.”

My phone vibrates. I swipe a pattern to release the screen lock, his picture pops up, *speak of the devil*. Selma grabs the phone, too fast for me to stop her, she fiddles with it and then hands it back. I scowl, sometimes Selma can be too much. His text message reads, *Still with your friend?*

Selma looks at my phone, a mischievous smirk adorning her face and it’s only then I notice what she did. She edited his name and saved it as Chocolate Cake.

HEYYY, READS a text message from him.

I’ve been willing my phone to ring or vibrate for the last hour. I eagerly finger my phone to type a reply.

Heyyy, you want to come over?” 20:34 PM

I’m in bed, it will take a lot to get me out from under these blankets. 20:37 PM

The only things I have to bribe you with, are: an electric blanket, wine, and sex. 20:38 PM

That’s what you usually bribe me with, plus walking and then having to undress you?

It just seems like a lot of work. 20:39 PM

I’ve made it easier for you. I’m already in bed, naked, listening to music.

I might have to devour myself in solitude. Because I can. But I’d prefer that you do it. 20:40 PM

You’re getting warmer. 20:41 PM

Not as warm as I’d be on top of you. 20:42 PM

You mean, under me? 20:43

I assume you’re lying down, so I chose the more visceral image. 20:44 PM

I don't think we'll need the wine. 20:48 PM

Honestly, when have we ever? 20:49 PM

You're now glowing red hot. 20:50 PM

I told you. I. WANT. YOU! 20:51 PM

Oh, bring a wine opener. 20: 52 PM

It's an eight minutes' walk from his place to mine. With his long legs, it usually takes him six.

I'm outside. 20:57 PM

You should come inside, or else I'll have to put clothes on.

Lock the gate on your way in, front door is open.

Wine is on the kitchen table." 20:58 PM

I pause the music, hear the gate clang open and close. The main door creaks, and by the clanking sound the cutlery drawer makes, I deduce he's in the kitchen. I press play. Two minutes pass. My phone vibrates next to me; it tickles my breast.

Change the playlist.

I can't fuck to that sad stuff you listen to when you're alone. 21:02 PM

I scroll down and click on our sex playlist, Rihanna is igniting some wild thoughts as the bedroom door opens. He closes the door, pours me a glass and puts the wine bottle on the bedside table. We smile our hellos. He pulls his shirt over his head and kicks off his shoes, the socks stay on—it's his thing. He unbuckles his belt, pulls his jeans down and steps out of them. He pulls down his underwear, purple briefs—the ones I like. I get wet, just looking at him in them. His erection springs up and curves to the left; I'm not the only eager one. He ties his dreadlocks up, and I grab my hair-band and tie my braids up as well. Tying up our hair is always a precursor to sex, hot sex.

He pulls the blanket back and inches up the bed to get on top of me, the hunger in his kiss as his lips cover mine is evident. This is definitely going to be some insanely hot sex.

THERE IS nothing that makes a morning good like waking up wrapped into a warm body; the feeling is only bettered by waking up with an erection pressed into your butt cheeks. I awake to feel him pressed into my ass, hard and hot. I can feel his need in the way his fingers brush my hair aside, and the way the heat in his breath raises the hair on my nape. I start to want him, the anticipation making me horny as fuck. His chest rubs firmly into my shoulder blades. One arm sneaks under my armpit, emerging on the other side to cup my breast as his fingers circle inch closer to the centre, flicking my nipple. Taunting, teasing, before kneading it between his thumb and index as both nipples harden in response. The chain reaction has started, pockets of energy start coalescing all over my body. The other hand slides over my hip and his fingers part my lips. Like opening a book, he flicks them back and forth, like pages—teasing. His thumb presses onto my clit, round and round it goes. He slides his finger down, he stops as it touches my entrance, but he doesn't slip it in. The energies keep coalescing all over my body.

He adjusts his body; his hips now pressing into the back of my thighs. It's deliberate, because it allows him to push his erection between my thighs and upwards. He rubs himself languorously against me, parting my lips, making sure the head of his cock touches me enough to know that he's there, enough to give me a taste, just enough to make me ask for more. He slides a finger in and my body reacts, a shake and a gasp—it feels amazing. He slides it in and out, before settling into a rhythm, arching it upwards. I moan and he keeps playing me, like my clit and labia are strings on a guitar. He slides in a second, just as my arousal builds, and then a third. I offer no complaints. He keeps it up till I'm gasping. He rolls onto his back, pulling his fingers out of me. He

grips my thighs, raising my legs in the air so my calves come to rest against his shoulders. Then he sinks into me, slow and deep.

The energies start migrating from their points of origin to a central location. He starts thrusting; slowly building a steady rhythm, the energies assembling. Our eyes meet, his lips close on mine, and he thrusts just a little harder. The energies in my core have peaked, little explosions start going off one by one before fusing into one big supernova which goes off inside me. He picks up speed, thrusting faster and harder till he's close. He's breathing against my neck; he bites my neck. Faster and harder. He's almost there, he grunts, breathing his ecstasy into my neck. He stills, I pull him into me by the buttocks. We hold it, like the last sit up in a set of 20. He slowly pulls out of me, rolling onto his back, opening up his arms, so I can tuck my head under the crevice that is home after an orgasm. My forehead comes to rest on his chest, he reaches across with his other arm, his elbow pokes my ribs, and his hand strokes the small of my back. We lie there, basking in the afterglow.

I murmur into his chin, "That was the perfect way to wake up."

I READ the words on his Instagram, a picture quote. He can string words together effortlessly; he has an expressive intellect which arouses me.

16.04.2016

When we are entangled, you and I end, and we begin.

It's in the subtleties: the extra two Ys in Heyyy, the glances and stares, and the inconspicuous innuendo.

It's slow, yet measured. As if we've practiced it a million times before.

He is writing about us, which is so sexy, and I read it again. It already has me fantasizing about our next entanglement.

I AM lying in bed, naked and horny. It's cold, my hormones are raging and I need a good fuck. However, Chocolate and I are not on speaking terms. We had our first argument and both said things we now regret. I really need him, all of him, body and mind. I need his humour and silly jokes just as much as I need the guaranteed orgasm. I attempt reconciliation with a text.

Heyyy, I'm tired of fighting

I want to make things right. 19:41

I wait, ten minutes turn to an hour, and I give up. Clearly, he is still mad at me. I deserve it as I should have handled myself better. I feel tears well up, I curse. I should have left it alone but I just had to open my big mouth.

I reach for my laptop and search for a movie. It is really cold, the kind that makes nipples pucker, so I pull the blankets around me and start watching my movie, I relax as my body starts to warm up. After the movie I send him one last desperate text, the bottle of wine I downed during the movie kicks in.

I am sorry; it was my fault.

I should have reacted better to the situation.

I really hate this silence.

I miss you. 23:51

I jump as my phone vibrates in my hand, he has replied with a smiley face and he explains that he

was asleep. My phone vibrates again as his name pops up on the caller ID. He answers with a “Heyyy,” and I lose myself for a moment.

“Heyy. What are you up to?”

“In bed, really tired,” he replies.

I ask him to come over, but he sighs and gives me excuses. The cold, snakes, his fear of the dark and that I should have told him earlier in the evening. I change my plan of approach. I tell him that the one thing that I really like about him is the way he smells; I can still smell him in my sheets. It takes him a few seconds to respond, the anticipation is building inside me.

“Thanks, I’ll take that as a compliment.”

I am stumped, not quite the response I was expecting. I exhale and then say, “I smell you the strongest when you’re inside me.”

I hear his breathing spike. “Okay, let me grab my jacket and put some shoes on.”

Notes on Contributors

BUBBLINNA is the third person of a split personality. She is a Nigerian writer subject to her headstrong chi. Most of her stories are still hatching. She is also a pharmacist who thinks she was either a professional dominatrix or a monk in a past life.

CHIBUÏHÈ OBI is a Queer Nigerian poet, essayist and photographer. He is a 2018 Fellow of Ebedi International Writers Residency, the winner of the 2017 *Brittle Paper* Anniversary Award, a finalist for the 2018 Gerald Kraak Award, and is currently on the Koffi Addo Prize longlist. His works have been published or are forthcoming in *Guernica*, *HEArt Journal*, *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *Gnarled Oak*, *Bluepepper*, *Brittle Paper*, *Expound Magazine*, *14: Queer Art*, *Mounting the Moon*, etc. His coming out essay, “We Are Queer, We Are Here,” has been made into a feature film. His poetry chapbook *hallowed* is forthcoming this fall in the U.S. from Damagedgoods Press.

JOYCE NAWIRI is a Kenyan African writer, lawyer and feminist. For her, writing is an art of her imagination, thoughts, feelings, biases and experiences as a melanin woman in an African Society. She’s an avid reader of Megan Ross, Okwiri Oduor, NoViolet Bulawayo, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Chimamanda and Stephen King. Her poem, “My Chocolate Skin,” has been published in *Best New African Poets 2017* anthology curated by Tendai Mwanaka. Her other works are featured on *Writers Space Africa* and *Pelleura*. She loves cooking, travelling and trying out motorbikes. When bored, she googles Guy Martin.

KWOH B. ELONGE is a Cameroonian writer, journalist and researcher. His work has been featured in *Kalahari Review*, *Bakwa Magazine*, and *Revue de Citoyens des Letters*. He works as a

Communication Officer for Elections Cameroon, the country's election management body. When he is not writing, he Googles Beyonce and Christopher Hitchens.

ALVIN KATHEMBE is a writer and poet from Nairobi, Kenya. His work has appeared on *Omenana* and various publications. Find him on Twitter @SofaPhilosopher.

OKWESILI BRYAN JOE was born in the southern part of Nigeria. He is keen on telling diverse African stories. He enjoys soliloquy as much as he does novels. His short fictions have appeared on Literallystories2014.com. He is currently a student of Law at the University of Calabar, Nigeria. Gmail: bryanokwesili@gmail.com. Facebook: Bryan Joe Oquesili.

MICHAEL LARRI: black, chocolate, kind; scared about what everything sums up to nought; scared of writing bios—they are the hardest things to write.

EUDIAH KAMONJO is a poet, writer, boudoir photographer and sex guide living in Nairobi, Kenya with her incredible three-year-old girl. She has been writing and performing poetry pieces (sometimes merging them with music and dance) since childhood. Eudiah has also worked as a print and online journalist since 2005 and has now ventured into filmmaking. She is passionate about storytelling, media and art in all its forms and organizes/hosts Indulgence Erotica Open Mic in Kenya to promote art. Her first poetry collection on sexuality will be published in 2018.

ANTHONY MADUKWE is a lawyer living in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. He spends all his spare time eating, writing, surfing the internet and mostly, reading stressful prose. He won the *AFREADA* Valentine's Day Contest 2018 as well as the Random Thoughts Creative Fiction Prize in 2017. His work has appeared on *The Kalahari Review*, *Dwartz Magazine*, etc. He is a feature writer for *First Culture* and blogs infrequently at thesilentspaces.wordpress.com.

OSINACHI is an Aba-born poet, play writer, short story writer, essayist and visual artist. His work has appeared in *Brittle Paper*, *Los Angeles Cultural Weekly*, and others. He was shortlisted for the 2015 Awele Creative Trust prize for short fiction. He has short stories forthcoming in various literary outfits.

SAVANNAH_MAFIA has a collection of Erotic poems in the making, one he titles *Amorous Songs*. His main interest lies within the borders of Art, Nature, Business, Philosophy and Life. When not writing, he can be found within the ambit of nature observing creatures go about their daily businesses. He writes from Lokoja, Nigeria where he is currently an Undergraduate of Computer Science at the Federal University.

BLESSING OFIA-INYINYA NWODO is fascinated by the extraordinary and is a stereotype challenger. She studied Adult Education/English Language at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. She was awarded the “Highly Rated” prize after winning the “Nigerian Travel Story” competition organized by Travel Next Door in 2016. When she is not scaring people off with her unintentionally scowling face, she loves to read, rap and travel. She lives in Lagos state.

DT HARRY writes short fiction from Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

ERNEST O. OGUNYEMI writes from Nigeria. His work has been featured in *Acumen*, *Tuck Magazine*, *African Writer*, *Praxis Magazine*, and is forthcoming in *Eunoia Review*, the BPPC Anthology 2018, *Kalahari Review*, and the *Praxis* poetry chapbook *Around The Fire 6*. He loves Brymo and music that touches the soul. He prays to write a story collection someday.

ERHU KOME YELLOW is an Urhobo writer from Nigeria. She is an alumna of Delta State University. Her short stories can be found in literary magazines and anthologies. Including that one time in a comic book and as a Google Ad. She was a finalist for the first edition of the Quramo

Writers' Prize. She currently writes for *The Bagus*. She loves to dance, read romance, watch shows like *Timeless* and, sometimes, football. Her dream car is the 1967 Chevy Impala. You can find her tweeting @erhuwrites.

PRECIOUS C.K. is a Ugandan writer who lives and works in Kampala, a city whose whims and fancies provide the perfect material for her stories. She loves to write on the themes of female sexuality, gender stereotypes and identity. Some of her stories have been published, most have not. Her first book, a semi-autobiographical work of creative nonfiction exploring the shift from girlhood into womanhood, will be published in 2019.

JERRY EDO is a 49-year-old Nigerian residing in Asaba, Delta State. He is a practicing lawyer who writes as a hobby. He has three published works: *How to Register and Run an Ngo in Nigeria* (self-published, non-fiction), *No One but You* (Venus Publishers, 2003), and *Hot Pants* (Venus Publishers, 2006). His interests include reading, writing and farming. Find him: edojerry@gmail.com, @Edojerry (Twitter).

SHAMMAH GODOZ is a person that is insane about food, books and travelling. He is a writer and a cook who is willing to travel anywhere as long as there is a functioning kitchen. However, he lives in Jos, Nigeria.

HUSSANI ABDULRAHIM is a Nigerian budding poet and undergraduate studying Pure Chemistry at Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto. He is a joint winner of Words, Rhymes & Rhythm's Green Author Prize 2016 for young, unpublished writers, and also the winner of WRR's 2018 Humanity Flash Contest. He co-authored *Rainbows & Fireflies*, an anthology of poems. Some of his work can be found at *Praxis*, *Youth Shades*, the Art Naija Series anthology *Work Naija: The Book of Vocations*, the *Vanguard HIV & Aids Awareness* anthology, etc. He strongly believes that words have the power to change and heal the world. Presently, he writes from Sokoto, Nigeria.

ALITHNAYN ABDULKAREEM is a development worker and writer based in Uganda. Her fiction explores queerness, mental illness, and human relationships. Her nonfiction covers film art, politics and development mostly. She is an alumnus of the Farafina Workshop. She has been published by *Quartz*, *OZY*, *Saraba*, *The Africa Report*, and *Afreada*, and was long listed for the 2018 Short Story Day Africa Prize.

FRANCES OGAMBA desires freedom from something she is not quite aware of. She writes to find out. She has stories published on *Afridiaspora* and the Writivism Prize 2016 anthology, and on a few blogs. She can be found majorly in Port Harcourt, and in some other Nigerian cities.

RAPHAEL D'ABDON was born in Udine (Friuli) and lives in Pretoria, South Africa. He is the author of three poetry collections that very few bought, and even fewer read: *sunnyside nightwalk* (2013), *salt water* (2016) and *the bitter herb* (2018). He has performed in a few countries, but then again, too few to mention. He has won one obscure literary prize and zero slams. If you invite him for a reading and he doesn't pitch, don't worry: you could get a poet with a more impressive cv anywhere.

FILEMON was an over-qualified chameleon-chasing geologist who couldn't make it as an engineer. Then a reluctant underground miner, who spent a year dodging falling rocks for a living. Now an Educator by accident, teaching the structure of the atom to kids who think Niels Bohr is a Swedish house DJ. People call me weird; I think they're jealous because the little voices don't talk to them. Filemon is an advocate for sarcastic humour, and a believer that jelly/gummy babies are the answer to world peace.