

# Kistrech



**Kistrech Poetry Festival  
Kenya 2018, Vol.6**

**6th Edition • 1st – 10th October 2018**



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Dr. Bwocha Nyagemi – **Paper Presentations**

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PATRON

Let me take this opportunity to welcome each one of you to the 6th edition of Kistrech International Poetry Festival in Kenya. As the Vice Chancellor of Kisii University, I am glad that our institution is able to support the planning and implementation of this event.

The festival has sparked off enthusiasm and passion in art and literature in Kisii University and has gone a long way to motivate literature students and upcoming writers to find new materials for their study. Some student-poets have been able to compile their literary works and are ready to present them for publication. Post graduate students in our institution have been led towards discovering new writers and literary works from around the globe for their theses and research papers.

Your coming here annually is of great importance to our community. The people in the village have discovered new friends in guest poets and have created networks with many of those who have participated in previous editions. This is what life is all about and all that it should be. To visit homes, during this festival, is a show of humanity and social linkages that God intends for all His creatures.

During your stay here, let your presence be felt, either in mentoring a student-poet, or in disseminating information about your country which can help a student in the pursuance of his or her study abroad. And if need arises for you to advise on career choices to our students, please do so as a way of promoting their studies.

And please do not participate only in this year's festival; but do come and attend the future editions as well and come with your friends who want to see Kenya.

I wish you a good stay in Kenya, and an enjoyable reading of your poems, performances of your raps, songs, spoken-word and presentation of academic papers.

**Professor John Akama**  
Vice Chancellor, Kisii University



*During your stay here, let your presence be felt, either in mentoring a student-poet, or in disseminating information about your country which can help a student in the pursuance of his or her study abroad.*



# MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Kistrech has grown to become the biggest literary event in Africa. Attracting over 30 poets each year, the festival has evolved into a multinational and multicultural event, making it more than just a literary experience.

We have grown to this magnitude because the poets, who participate in our festival every year, have taken upon themselves to help and support the event by paying their flights, accommodation and food. I recall the poets who came in the inaugural editions of this festival gave us advice which has, since, guided us in making this festival better. The embassy of Israel has given support to this event and has gone out of its way to reach other embassies in Nairobi to also give support. Hence these embassies have come out to sponsor poets from their countries. This is a gesture of kindness and humanity. We thank Mashpark Hotel in Nairobi and Nebo Hotel in Kisii for their effort in providing conducive accommodations and foods. We also thank Riara University and Migori Campus of Kisii University for hosting the event in their institutions.

As we struggle to secure more funding and more support, we hope our participating poets and writers will understand and continue to be patient with us in perfecting this event. Once more thank you for choosing to participate in this year's Kistrech Poetry Festival. I wish you an enjoyable poetry reading.

**Dr. Christopher Okemwa**  
Editor & Director



*“ We have grown to this magnitude because the poets, who participate in our festival every year, have taken upon themselves to help and support the event by paying their flight, accommodation and food. ”*

# MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

## EMBASSY OF ISRAEL- NAIROBI

### MESSAGE FROM H.E. NOAH GAL GENDLER

Jambo!

It is with great honour and pleasure that the embassy of Israel in Nairobi is again involved in the Kistrech International Poetry Festival in Kenya. We are pleased to be supporting this 6th edition and bringing one Israeli poet, Dr. Diti Ronen, to the festival. Ms. Diti Ronen is a poet, an editor and a translator of poetry. Ronen has published six full length poetry books, as well as numerous essays and articles. Her poetry has been translated into many languages and published in literary magazines and anthologies worldwide. She has been awarded three International poetry awards, including the Terra Poetica Award, two national awards, prizes of honours, poetry residences and scholarships. She's coming to put Israel on the map, especially through her paper presentation regarding "Poetry and Song in Hebrew -Past and Present."

We heralded a call to embassies in Nairobi early this year requesting them to join us in supporting this event. A number of them have heeded the call and hence have sponsored poets from their countries to attend Kistrech festival. We are sure that their support will help to improve and propel the event further into becoming a multinational and multicultural festival. It is unique in its own way and one of its kind in Africa.

We hope the festival will become sustainable and adequate so as to continue to provide a platform for established and upcoming writers. It also provides space for writers to exchange ideas and cultural materials. Student-poets who attend the event are likely to get first-hand information on Universities and institutions of higher learning in foreign countries and learn of the situation of art around the globe, as well as get an opportunity of interacting with publishers and editors during the festival

I write to urge more embassies in Nairobi and art agencies around the globe to actively join in supporting Kistrech International Poetry Festival. The Embassy of Israel in Nairobi pledges to continue giving her support to future editions.

Asante sana. Shalom

AMBASSADOR  
Embassy of Israel Nairobi.



## H.E. NOAH GAL GENDLER

Ambassador,  
Embassy of Israel Nairobi

# Alexandra Salmela



Alexandra Salmela is an author of literary fiction for adults and children. She publishes her work both in Finnish and Slovak language. She also works as a translator and a theatre practitioner.

Salmela was born in Bratislava, former Czechoslovakia, now Slovakia, in 1980. She studied theatre dramaturgy in Bratislava and Finnish philology and literature in Prague, Czech Republic. She has been based in Finland since 2007.

Salmela's debut novel, *27 or death makes an artist*, published in Finland in 2010, was awarded the prestigious Helsingin Sanomat Prize for Debut of the Year and nominated for The Finlandia Prize and numerous other prizes in Finland and Slovakia. Her books for children met with a positive reception and several prize nominations, too. Her latest work, experimental novel *Antihero*, came out in autumn, 2015. Since then she has published her short stories as well as feuilletons in both Finnish and Slovak media, literary reviews and anthologies.

In her work in progress, Salmela continues experimenting with the structure, language and form of the text. She is interested in ways of expressing meanings through visual aspect of the text (eg. typography, graphic layout); other important topic is the deterioration of language. In her work, the genre stereotypes are being broken, and literary forms melt into each other, while poetry and prose overlap.

Salmela is interested in performative potential of read prose, rhythmical dialogue between different texts. In the field of theatre she focuses on site specific, performance and other borderline genres.

Salmela was an artist in residencies in Finland, Estonia and Italy, and presented her work at numerous book fairs, festivals, author's readings and seminars around Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Slovakia. She likes trees and is slowly shifting towards happy endings.



## *You are a Machine*

The Princess  
Walked into the desert  
Like a machine  
You do the same  
You walk into the desert  
There is nothing you're lacking. You have everything fine. You have a roof over your head, you have safety, health, nutrition, you're not lacking anything. You have all you need. Not. Yes! No!!! You have a roof over your head, you have/// Human is a social animal. When the basic needs are satisfied, it starts craving for --- what? Intellectual stimuli, beauty, play. Love. Social relations are human's basic needs. Human needs a pack, human is a social animal. You're not lacking anything. You have everything fine. You have a roof over your head, you have/// Human is a social animal!

You are a machine.  
You walk like a machine.  
You don't crave  
For anything  
Just: Walk like a machine  
You're a machine.  
You're a machine.  
You're a ma  
You're funny, you walk funnily. You're different from what you imagine.

- By Alexandra Salmela



# Ambily Omanakuttan



INDIA

She is a writer, poet and activist. She writes articles in newspapers and magazines. Her poems are published in magazines, weeklies and news media. She was a bank employee but resigned so that she can engage in her social activities. She works with organizations for human rights, environment and nature. It was quite accidentally that she entered the field of social activism from poetry. Initially, her activities were centered on tribals. While working for their welfare, she also involved herself in struggles against their exploitation and for their rights. Ambily, raises her voice against the injustices meted out to citizens by the society and the political system through her essays and poems. She is more interested in being known as a humanist rather than as a poet. She has lived among the tribals and understood their lives and culture from close quarters and hence has the welfare of all indigenous people of the world as her primary concern. She also uses her word power against the attacks on women and children. Though she has written many poems, she has never thought of collecting them into a book because she's too busy with her activism. But, very soon, a collection is coming out in her mother tongue and translations into English, Hindi, Telugu and Tamil. She believes that poetry is her soul and more so a weapon for her activities.

## The Altar Of Sins

*(I dedicate this poem to an 8-year old little girl in India who was gang-raped and murdered)*

You, fatherless Gods  
who enjoyed watching  
a small girl being raped,  
I want to gouge out your eyes  
and burn down your temples  
haunted by Brahmanism.  
I want to be a Naxalite to write  
a poem in the red rhythm of bullets  
on the bodies of the savages  
who fucked to death  
a tiny body in religious frenzy.  
I want to be ecstatic filling my ears  
with the music of the cries that arise  
when I chop to pieces those pricks  
that erected at the sight of a baby.  
I want to lay their severed heads  
at the feet of India.  
that bows her head in shame.  
I want to spit on the face of this  
Law and the legal system  
that converts injustice into justice.  
Sometimes I want violence  
And want to become fire.

- By Ambily Omanakuttan

*“I want to  
gouge out  
your eyes  
and burn  
down your  
temples”*





# Prof. Canisia Lubrin



Canisia Lubrin is a writer, editor, critic, English professor and the author of *augur* (Gap Riot Press, 2017) and *Voodoo Hypothesis* (Wolsak & Wynn, 2017), named to several notable books lists, including CBC's Best Books of 2017, finalist for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award, the Pat Lowther Memorial Award and the Raymond Souster Award. Lubrin lives in Whitby, Canada.

## I In The Marrow

I remembers being is a thing like light, it arrives and—  
I is here breeding out /of the dead lands, a definable origin  
I wants none of the cleverness,/ the stoppages, the nausea,  
and please, no metaphors churning after being/ no hurling through  
or finally entering plasma as singing, blood which still belongs to legions  
I like everyone is /from clearing wave  
where everything opens, /and beauty exists as assassin in the bone  
cured if drawn outward /by singing what it is too nakedly late to sing,  
I insists the dawn into a spilling or a lift/ into the irresponsibility of doves  
emerging with their late-summer /songs in early June, as you, too, sing  
the woods, how they pull out their hair/ as though they, too, are aware,  
and lust-sharp for life, as though demanding I waver in the gaze of  
another/  
passer-by adrift in their love-drunk uncertain self /before one woman  
and another  
woman and the one who must name her history/ arriving ass-first,  
to the bewildered crowd, I is a quick slash on the tongue, nothingmore/  
and all of this I makes from a glimpse of my mother in the mirror,  
seeing because it was necessary to see,/everything orphaned returned to  
familiarity,  
so what has been has been, and what is a spilling or a lift if not the cavity  
where a life  
begins,/ do not excuse me/ I is not who I says/I have become

- By Canisia Lubrin

*...beauty exists as  
assassin in the bone  
cured if drawn  
outward...*



# CHRISTOPHER OKEMWA



KENYA

Christopher Okemwa is a lecturer of Literature as well as the director of the School of Post Graduate Studies at Kisii University, Kenya. He is also the founder and director of Kistrech International Poetry Festival in Kenya. His published works range from poetry collections (*Toxic Love*, Watermark, 2004; *The Gong*, Nsemia Inc., 2010; *Purgatorius Ignis*, Nsemia Inc., 2016), oral literature (*Riddles of the Abagusii People of Kenya: Gems of Wisdom from the African Continent*, Nsemia Inc., 2011; *The Proverbs of the Abagusii of Kenya: Meaning & Application*, Nsemia Inc., 2012; *Otenyo the Hero of the Abagusii*, Nsemia Inc., 2016), and a short story collection (*Chubot, the Cursed One and Other Stories*, Nsemia Inc., 2011). This is in addition to three children's books and five folktales of the Abagusii, among others. Okemwa's novella, *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*, won 2015 Burt Award for African Literature (Kenya). In 2018 he successfully defended his Doctoral thesis titled "A Study of the Kwani? Open Mic 'Literary-Gangsta' Performance Poetry of Kenya" at Moi University, Kenya. He also holds an MA and a Bachelor of Education degrees in literature from the University of Nairobi, Kenya.

## DON'T CRY

If I die, don't cry  
Because I would become a rose flower  
Grow in our flower garden  
And exude fragrance  
You will pick me during Christmas  
Display me during birthdays  
Smell me during wedding ceremonies  
I will be part of the family  
So, if I die, don't cry

If I die, don't be grieved  
Because I would become a bumpkin leaf  
Grow in our vegetable garden  
Pick me for supper in the evenings  
Cook me in the kitchen at night  
I will be at the dining table with you  
So, if I die, don't be grieved

If I die, don't moan  
Because I will become rain  
Fall down from the sky in the evenings  
Gather me by the gutters  
And wash kitchen utensils with me  
I will be in our kitchen water-pot  
So, if I die, don't moan

If I die, don't scream  
Because I will become a tree  
Grow in the corner of our homestead  
Cut me occasionally for firewood  
Keep a heap of me in our kitchen  
Make fire and cook ugali with me  
I will be part of the household  
So, if I die, don't scream

- By Christopher Okemwa

*If I die, don't moan  
Because I will become rain  
Fall down from the sky in  
the evenings  
Gather me by the gutters*



## CHRISTOS R.TSIAILIS

Author C. R. Tsiailis resides in Cyprus. His passion for writing consumes most of his time, especially when he is not out training as a triathlete. He travels a lot, recording memories from everywhere, which he incarnates (along with his observations on human behaviour), in all genres (poetry, short story, novel, theatre). His writing tends towards a blend of social, psychological and philosophical quest. He publishes internationally in literary magazines and anthologies, both in Greek and in English. He has received numerous distinctions in Panhellenic literary contests for poems, short stories and theatre plays. He is the author of "Throwing Dice On A Chessboard", 2010, "The Green Divorce", 2012, the sci-fi novel 'Klotho Surfaces', April 2016, and the short story collection "ΨΩΜΙ (=bread)" 2017. He also writes articles, interviews of artists and book reviews for Literary Magazines in Greece. He is occasionally a member of Panhellenic literary contests' committees.

He is coming with his friends, Elena Jordanou (musician), Marios Eleftheriou (cook) and Christiana Georgiou.



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## ELENA JORDANOU

Elena Jordanou was born in Paphos, a coastal town in Cyprus. She studied music at the National Conservatory of Athens and is a graduate of classical guitar and musicology in theory, counter-harmony and fugue. Besides electric and classical guitar tutoring for twenty years, she has worked as a pianist and music entertainer in hotels and nightclubs. She has participated in the creation of the personal disc of the Cypriot poet and musician Andreas Artemis, playing guitar and presented his work in Nicosia. She played for the philharmonic orchestra of Pafos and participated in the celebrations of the accession of Cyprus to Europe by playing guitar under the auspices of the Municipality of Paphos. She took part in the master class of the renowned guitarists Leo Brouwer, Costas Cotsiol, Aniello Desiderio and Sabrina Vlaskalic. Currently, she is preparing a classic guitar duet recital, which she will present all over Cyprus.



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## MARIOS ELEFThERIOU

Marios Eleftheriou was born in Nicosia, Cyprus. His studies in culinary arts in the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus initiated his carrier as a cook in five star hotels in Cyprus. He has worked for Hilton Cyprus Hotel for two decades and has cooked for private parties and embassies. He specializes in French, Chinese and Japanese cuisine, but is always eager to prepare a traditional local delicacy for friends at home.







# Cliff Oyugi Kerage



KENYA

Cliff Oyugi is a teacher of English/Literature, actor, musician and writer. In 2013 he joined New Star, a travelling theatre situated in Kisi town and has since performed set book plays in various schools. He is among the first cast that staged *Otenyo, the Hero of the Abagusii*, a play written by Christopher Okemwa. He has written several poems that will be published in 2019. Additionally, Oyugi is planning to start a movie production industry in Kisii.

## The Putrid

Our current system riles  
This vile system a frick  
It rapes and defiles  
Our system befouls and infects  
With erotically transmitted diseases  
Burgles and smuggles like scamp  
Our system pong like death  
A shit-hole structure cankered with scum  
Barren to detect no cum  
A living carcass gradually decomposing  
Going obsolete into abyss of oblivion  
With wounded justice oozing pus  
A corrupt fascist vitiated in buggery  
Our system micturate depraved scandals  
Our lame system a ruin  
Debased to shambles by famished wolves  
With squalid charismatic pecuniary paws  
Our system scatters the fruits of our sudor  
Squealing it down the cesspool savages

Whose frozen yet rotten hearts  
Are corroded with black soot of putrid  
And their minds fizzled  
Our system devoured by sordid worms  
Exudating venom into lousy blood  
Flowing in jigger-invested vessels  
Our current system reeks like hell  
Contaminating the entire society  
Crawling and creeping towards purity.

**-By Cliff Oyugi Kerage  
6.20.2018**

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*Our system scatters  
the fruits of our sudor...*

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# Deborah Emmanuel



SINGAPORE

Deborah Emmanuel (b.1988) is a Singaporean poet, performer, and four-time TEDx speaker. She has featured at festivals like the Makassar International Writers Festival and the Queensland Poetry Festival. Her work has shown in places like New York City, Berlin, Kathmandu, London and Melbourne, and she has toured alongside poets like Sarah Kay and Anthony Anaxagorou.

Deborah's first collection, *When I Giggle In My Sleep*, was published by Red Wheelbarrow Books early 2015. Her foray into creative non-fiction, *Rebel Rites*, launched in 2016. When not making poems, Deborah makes music with Wobology, The Ditha Project, and Kiat, performs as an actor on stage and screen and facilitates workshops. Her most recent work experiments with moving poetry into the physical body and the practice of intuitive illustration.

The peace I once had  
is running away  
in blurred horizon,  
in melting line.  
Why is our rhythm  
boxed and broken?



Freight train feet rush me to a destination,  
but I am carried cargo on an endless river.  
The terror of losing keeps me playing along  
in orchestras of malfunctioned song.  
My heart clock ticks a traffic light countdown.  
My soul drum quickens to breathless heels.  
The beats we build are too fast for my chest;  
rush hour rage leaping too far to catch.  
The peace I once had is running away  
in blurred horizon, in melting line.  
Why is our rhythm boxed and broken?  
Why do my fingers tap binary code?  
I want to listen to whispering leaves,  
but you people flee like there isn't time.  
I want to break the fall of a struggling calf,  
but you people roar like bursting fire.  
Let me be free from this discordant symphony,  
with beasts astray on growling wheels.  
Let me live far from grids and steely teeth,  
crushing my windpipe with diamond leash.  
I shall hide in the forest where the sound is right,  
where there is no man and no machine.  
I shall lie in the forest where there is no light,  
and listen to beings a part of me

- By Deborah Emmanuel



# DR. DITI RONEN



ISRAEL

**EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE NOW.  
THE MUSIC WILL COME CLOSER,  
THE WIND WILL SPIN...**

Dr. Diti Ronen is a poet, an editor and a translator of poetry.

Ronen has published six full length poetry books, as well as numerous essays and articles. Her poetry has been translated into many languages and published in literary magazines and anthologies worldwide. Ronen performs her work on different stages in Israel and around the world. She was awarded three International poetry awards, including the Terra Poetica Award, two national awards, prizes of honors, poetry residencies and scholarships.

Her poetry is derived from her personal narrative, being part of a persecuted minority, as well as from imaginary alternative narratives. Accordingly, Ronen's literary work is varied from feminist poetry, like in the book "Inner Moon: Note book" (Hakiboutz Hameuchad, 2002) that relates to the female Menstrual cycle in relation to the Moon monthly cycle, to her own family memory, like in the book "littlebird" (Bar Ilan, 2010) that relates to a specific event in The Holocaust, and to journey poetry, like in the book "The return of the house and its wanderings" (Hakiboutz Hameuchad, 2016) that relates to her search for a home (The book was awarded by the Kugel Literary Award). Her upcoming book, "Many Mothers", relates to her collective-personal memories of her own feminine existence in previous generations.

Ronen has also edited five poetry books, all of them published in Israel (Pardess Publishing House, Haifa, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). She is currently in the process of editing two additional poetry books, one of them is expected to be published in 2018, and the second in 2019.

Ronen has translated and published numerous poems, all of them translated from English along and together with the poets. Currently she is working together with the poet Amir Or on a Young Georgian Poetry Anthology.

Besides her literary work, Ronen is a lecturer and a researcher of Arts, Theatre & Cultural Policy and she writes policy papers and advises on culture and arts to different organizations. She recently left her work at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to focus on poetry. She is the former head of Cultural Policy, Theatre and Literature Departments in the Israeli Ministry of Culture. Her academic work is in Theatre, and her research explores the Actor's cognitive work while performing his role as a character on stage in front of an audience.

Diti was born in Tel Aviv. She is the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, and the mother of five. She lives with her spouse in Neve Monoson, a community near Tel Aviv.

## The voice of the poem

The voice of the poem is the voice of the night.  
An empty page and darkness around,  
Even the deer have left  
Their footsteps in the forest have ceased. A chill  
wind  
Is also a voice, and a faraway music,  
And one man is turning over in his sleep,  
dreaming his  
Childhood. Everything is possible now.  
The music will come closer,  
The wind will spin  
And the deer will dance at the forest fringe,  
And only the darkness will stay, let it stay,  
And the inviting page.

**-By Dr. Diti Ronen**



A portrait of Dr. Małgorzata Lebda, a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, wearing a teal sweater. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

# Dr. Małgorzata Lebda

 | POLAND

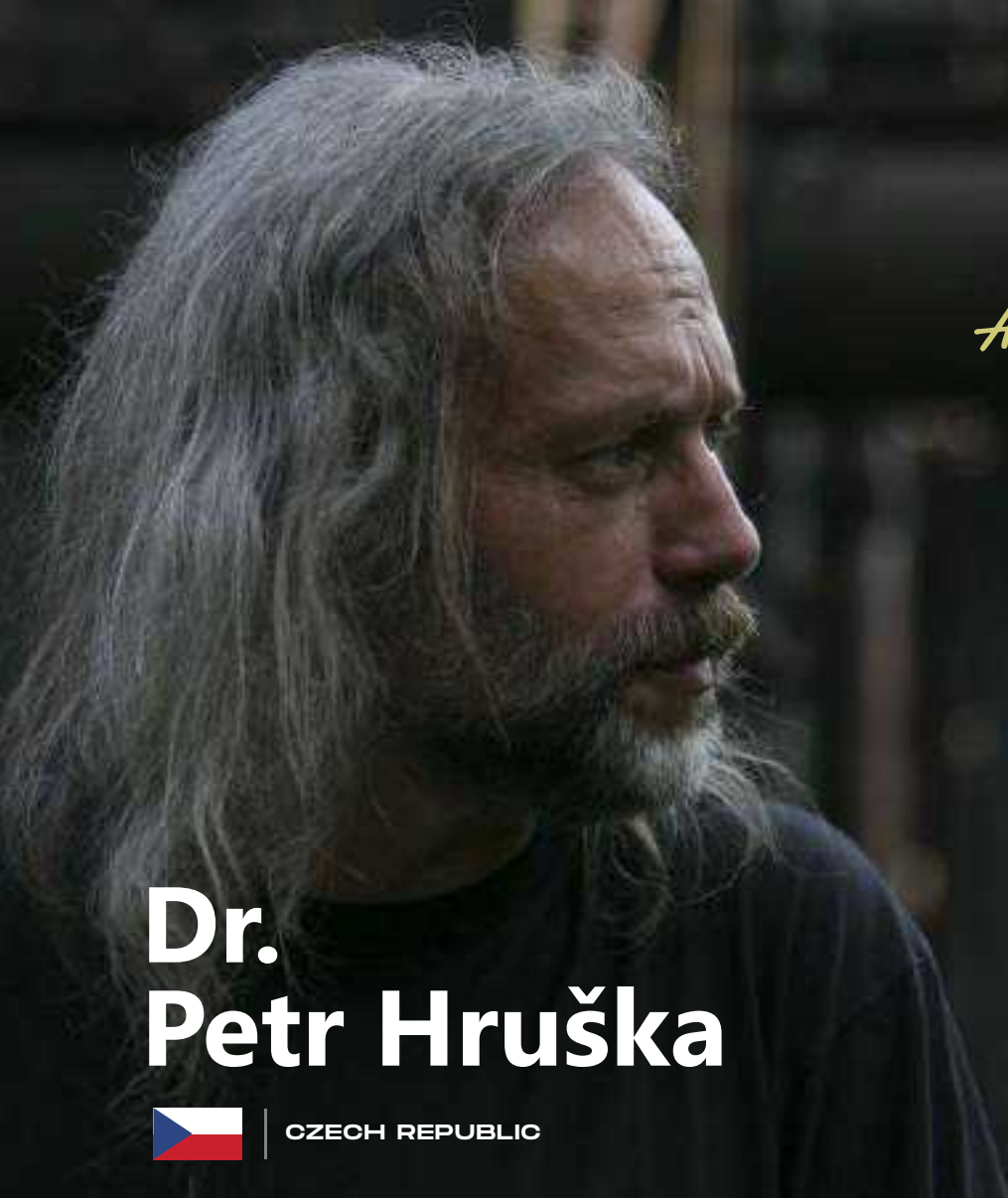
Dr. Małgorzata Lebda (b.1985) grew up in Żelaźnikowa Wielka, a village in the Beskid Mountains. Ultra marathon runner, mountaineer and photographer, she holds a PhD in Literary Theory and Audiovisual Arts and works as an academic lecturer in Kraków. She has four volumes of poetry to her name; her most recent book, *Matecznik* (Queen Cells, 2016) has won the title of the Kraków Book of the Month, Stanisław Barańczak Fellowship (the Poznań Literary Award) and 'Orpheus', the Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński Prize.

## white bread

-By Dr. Małgorzata Lebda,  
translation: Marek Kazmierski

*dear sister let's invoke the night* our hands tend to orate oracles  
our gestures focused and slow aiming in the direction of the  
woods but *can you hear that?*

Father's heavy footsteps behind the door as he lays fresh pork out  
on the table in the morning he will light a fire in the smokehouse  
hearth farmers will pay visits thick-set women in their long aprons  
and children with glass beads for eyes we will approach  
them as if they were wild animals we will sniff around them we  
who are like wild animals to try recognition *this is how it will be*  
and mother will cover a cold plate with a slice of warm dewlap  
and of white bread



# Dr. Petr Hruška



OZECH REPUBLIC

## *A Room for the Night*

the big trucks roared as if ravenous  
beasts of the night  
you called out the price to me  
a room for two people  
the guy from the gas station  
angular with lack of sleep  
led us up a steep staircase  
Berlin Krakow Trieste all of it  
was in the past now  
I had never seen  
such a narrow room  
when we wanted to turn around  
we had to embrace

- By **Dr. Petr Hruška**,  
Translated by **Jonathan Bolton**

The poet, columnist, scriptwriter and university teacher Petr Hruška was born in Ostrava in Czech Republic on 7 June 1964. He took a degree in Czech language, literature and literary studies in Ostrava. He works in the Institute of Czech Literature of the Academy of Sciences, in Brno, and also teaches literature at Masaryk University, in Brno. He is on the editorial board of *Host*, a literature monthly. Dresdner Lyrikpreis (1998) and Jan Skácel Award (2009) and National prize for literature (2013) winner.

Petr Hruška grew up in Ostrava, where his father was a chemical engineer and his mother a nurse. His brother Pavel is a literary critic and theoretician. His partner Yvetta Ellerová is a singer and composer (the Ostrava musical groups *Norská trojka*, *Complotto*). After his secondary school studies in Ostrava (he graduated in 1983), he studied at the Ostrava Mining University (Department of Mineral Resources, specialising in water treatment, engineering degree in 1987). Between 1990–1994 he studied Czech Literature and Literary Theory at Ostrava University (his M.A. thesis was on *Contemporary Underground Czech Poetry and Prose*). Later he completed his doctoral studies at Masaryk University in Brno (doctoral thesis on *“Postwar Surrealism and Reactions to Inertia in the Avant-Garde Model in Official Poetry”*, successfully defended in 2003). From 1994–1995 he had an internship at the Institute for Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences and since 1995 he has been employed there as a researcher in 20th Century Literature. He resides in Ostrava.

Since the early 1990s he has been publishing poetry, literary criticism and literary history articles in the magazines *Host*, *Tvar*, *Revolver Revue*, *Literární noviny*, *Souvislosti*, *Weles*, *Psí víno*, *Lidé a Země*, *Slovenská literatúra*, *Protimluv*, *Obráčená strana měsíce*, etc. Since the mid 1990s he has also regularly contributed as a literary critic for *Radio Vltava*. With Jan Balaban he founded the magazines *Landek* (1995–1998, and sporadically) and *Obráčená strana měsíce* (since 2003), and together they also performed in Jiří Surůvka's cabarets. With Ivan Motýl he organised *Literární hrendy* (1992–1994), often improvised evenings of literary events, text-appeal and happenings. Together with Radovan Lipus he wrote the play *Průběžná 0(s) trava krve* (premiere 1994; television recording 1997, radio recording 2000, also CD in 2000). He wrote the script to the documentary film *Genius loci – A History of the Literary Magazines Host and Host do domu* (dir. Vladimír Kelbl, TV Brno, 2002, broadcast 2003). Several of his poems have been set to music by the group *Norská trojka* (CD *Zelený Petr*, 2002). The (2/3 2004) edition of the literary magazine *Aluze* published a CD with the author reading selected poems. He contributed to the samizdat magazine *Eliáš v zahrádkách* (1987) under the pseudonyms *ph* and *p hr*.



*I do  
what I like doing  
and sometimes  
get paid for it*

# FRANK KEIZER



NETHERLANDS

Frank Keizer (1987) is a poet, writer and editor based in Brussels and Amsterdam. His most recent book of poetry is *Onder normale omstandigheden* (Under Normal Circumstances), published in 2016. His poems have appeared in Dutch in many magazines across Belgium and the Netherlands, and have been translated into English, German, Romanian, French, Portuguese and Malayalam, a language spoken in southern India. He has participated in readings and festivals all over the world, from London to Berlin and from San Francisco to India. He curates a series of contemporary poetry in translation at *Perdu*, a foundation for experimental poetry and poetics in Amsterdam, and works as an editor for *nY*, a Flemish literary magazine for literature and criticism.

## POEM

it feels like I've fallen into the hands of rabid  
democrats, dutiful people like us  
who work weekends and have no wish  
to take part in the war of each against all  
but I'm in Brussels  
I do what I like doing  
and sometimes get paid for it  
the new work ethics is not spiteful  
being worn out has consequences  
existence means survival and sincerity is a form  
of disillusioned luxury  
the left has become stupid  
and nothing can be achieved  
without European backing  
so we set up meetings and these lead to other meetings  
how can we organize each other?  
I'll never say this again and after that I'm free  
the perfect storm is a shower  
in the united colours of Benneton

-By Frank Keizer,  
Translation: Donald Gardner





NIGERIA/KENYA

# FUNKE MICHAELS

## Edward S. mason Fellow at Havard University.

Nigerian-by-birth, Kenyan-by-Marriage: Funke Micheals has over 21 years 'hands-on' sales, marketing and advertising experience - with multi-million budget brands like Coca-Cola, Peugeot, Rothmans, Heineken, Subaru and Samsung.

Working globally across Sub-saharan Africa, North-Africa/Middle East, Europe and the UK, Latin-America and the Caribbean as a Creative-Communications practitiner. Funke speaks 7 languages and works well across English and French-speaking communities. She has won awards for her work in Marketing Commuications, especially with new or renewed product introductions. She has aslo been a cross-functional resource for African, Caribbean governments and multi-nationals. She is committed to fostering development and industry through collaborations between academia, entrepreneurs and leaders of the corporate political and humanitarian frontiers.

Funke is an MIT Sloan Fellow, and Harvard Mason Fellow; a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Marketing, and The Institute of Brand Management. She is co-founder of the Pro-NCHE Network, a not-for-profit organization providing free concept incubation, niche-networking and consulting services for African start-ups. Funke teaches a postgraduate course in International Brand and Sales Excellence - IBX(360-Degree Marketing) at The Orange Academy, Lagos; and i on the project board of The Singing Torah in Boston, an MIT-affiliated tech start-up for the preservation and teaching of Hebrew Oral Culture. She is a member of The NIT Think Tank, and USAID "Young African Leaders Initiative" Funke is also an author, adjunct lecturer, Public Speaker, culture Coach and agricultural entrepreneur in East Africa.

## Conga Corpus

As the skin  
of the African drum  
Reacts  
To the grip of the drummer's thighs.  
So I, to you.  
As the spin  
of the African dance  
Responds  
To the coax of the drummer's hands.  
So Mine, to yours.  
Head thrown back  
Feet thrown out  
Arms a-flailing  
Hips a-sailing  
Undulating  
To the tongue  
Of the rhythm  
Overwhelming  
In the long, long  
lick of the drummer's flame.

- By Funke Michaels



# Gábor Lanczkor



Gábor Lanczkor was born in Székesfehérvár, Hungary, in 1981. He studied in Budapest, and spent long periods in Rome, Ljubljana and London. He is an award-winning author with eleven published books: novels, poetry volumes, children's books and essays. He is the guitarist of the band Médeia Fiai, and is involved in the musical project Anarchitecture.

His selected poems in English were published under the title Sound Odyssey in 2016 (Poetrywala, Mumbai). He lives in a tiny Hungarian village with his wife and two daughters.

## DREAM BORDER

The dawn has a perfect beginning.  
A needle stings my eye in the darkness;  
It slips, makes a cut and snaps my  
Eyelids up,  
Then pins the sun on my pupil  
(As if my pupil were the hidden shadow of the sun;  
A solar system  
Lit from the eye,  
Igniting antique stars),  
Like a kid pins a murdered  
Hard-winged bug into his insectarium.  
I wink and do not asleep again.

-By Gábor Lanczkor



# Dr. Geir Halnes



NORWAY

Dr. Geir Halnes is a Norwegian poet and computational neuroscientist, born just outside the Norwegian capital of Oslo in 1976. In education, he has a Master's degree in physics and a PhD in computational biology. He is currently employed as researcher at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, where he develops mathematical models of brain cells, trying to figure out what's going on inside our heads. In parallel to his work as a scientist, he has published two books of poetry, titled *If You See Me, Send My Love* (2007) and *Mother Space* (2017), both at the publishing house Forlaget Oktober.

## it was not a closed system

it was not a closed system

meteorites fell to earth  
cracks appeared

through cracks we were born  
with our own cracks

we used them  
to eat structure and crap chaos

in this way  
order could feed in us  
and we developed the most wonderful brains

the brains were cracks

trees fell in  
and turned to trees inside us  
mountains fell in  
and turned to mountains inside us

meteors fell  
like electrical sprinkles across the visual cortex  
and like chills down our spines

-By Geir Halnes

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In education,  
he has a Master's degree  
in physics and a PhD in  
computational biology.

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# Grzegorz Kwiatkowski

 POLAND

Grzegorz Kwiatkowski (born in 1984 in Gdańsk, Poland) - poet, musician. Published six books: "Przeprawa" 2008, "Eine Kleine Todesmusik" 2009, "Osłabić" 2010, "Radości" 2013, "Spalanie" 2015, "Sową" 2017 in the best Polish publishing house – Biuro Literackie. Translated into English (Marek Kazmierski – "Powinni się nie urodzić / They Should Not Have Been Born" – the first trilogy of books) and German (Bernhard Hartmann – the new trilogy of books). The English book was published in 2011 by OFF Press Publishing House in Great Britain. The beneficiary of the "Artist in Residence" Scholarship (Kulturkontakt Austria, 2016). The beneficiary of the International House of Writers Graz Scholarship (2015, Austria). The beneficiary of the "Styria Artist in Residence" (2017). His poems in German were published in "Ostragehege", "Lichtungen" and "Keine Delikatessen". Selected poems were also translated into English by Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese and published in Poetry Wales. His poetry is taking part in the European Versopolis Project. Member of the music group Trupa Trupa (a band Sasha Frere-Jones from New York Times called "one of the best in the World"). Author of the script for the "Duety niestniejące" play by Theater Dada von Bzdülów and Mikołaj Trzaska (2011). Co-author of the libretto adaption for "Madame Curie" opera by Elżbieta Sikora (2011). Created the visual installations together with Maciej Salamon and Maciej Chodziński – "Powinni się nie urodzić" (2010) and "Niech żyją nam / Nie żyją nam" (2012).

## harvest

our true vocation is farming  
not killing  
though I have to admit:  
slaughter on the bogs occurred to the rhythm of seasons  
and in heavy rains we didn't harvest

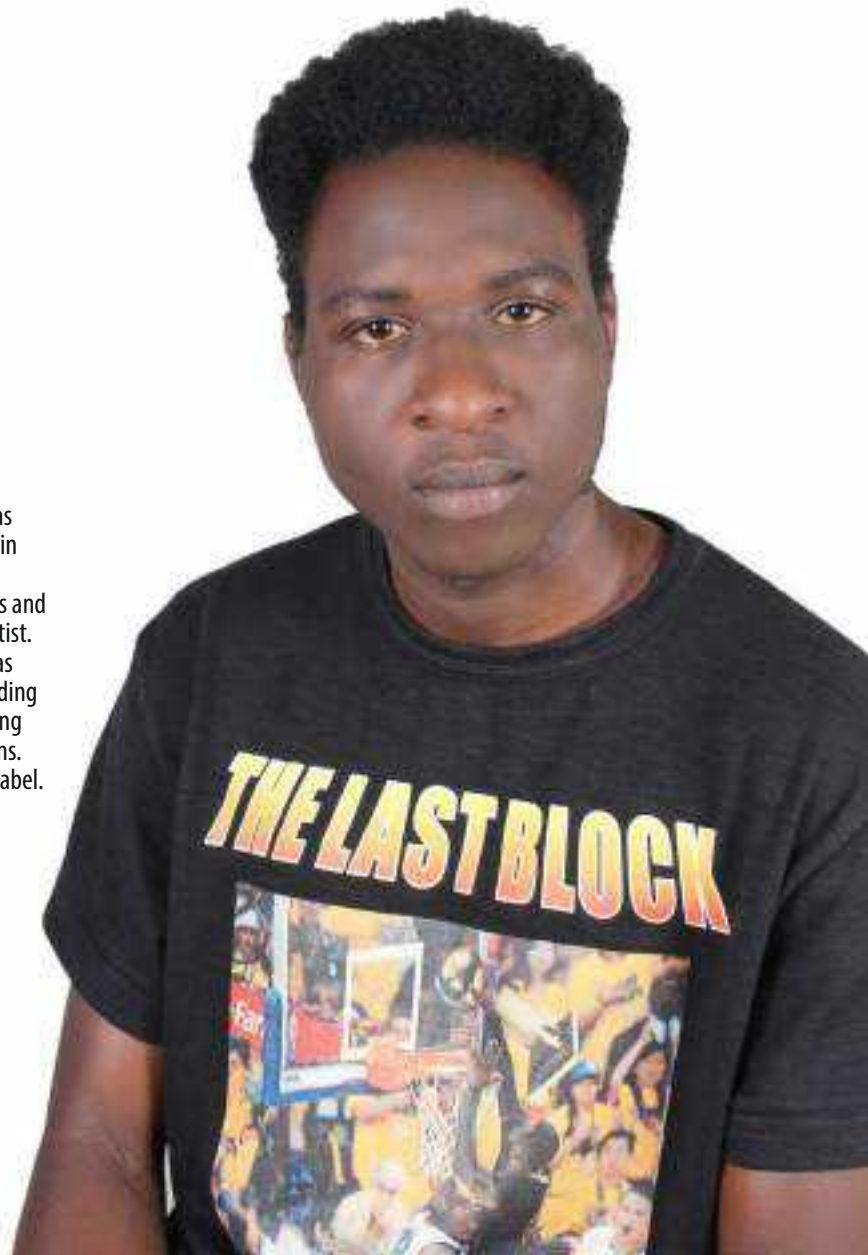
**-By Grzegorz Kwiatkowski**

# HARRISON OMAMBIA



KENYA

Harrison Omambia is a poet, rapper and spoken word artist. He was born in Kenya in 1993. His passion for writing began when he was in primary school where he participated in poetry competitions. Omambia has written poems yet to be published. His rapping skills and ghost writing for other artists makes him stand out as a unique artist. His passion for rap began when he was in secondary school. He was influenced by the kind Kendrick Lamar and J. Cole who are the leading performing artists of new generation in the US. Omambia is looking forward to publish his poetry and release educative Hip Hop albums. He's still an underground artist trying to establish his own record label.



Every day folks huddle and weep chronically  
Creating a wild mass-hysteria  
Randon clamorous grotesque shriek  
Which beget goosebumps on kids' skin  
Because their beloved got spewed out  
From the filthy hands of the world  
Now the entire cluster shudders in agony  
But everybody must meet cessation  
So the hearse grabs scrip back to back  
Since the lethal patronages must allot

Aftermath, the kins pacify and quiten  
The long shrill outcry  
The deceased had began to enjoy  
The tranquility of the subterranean  
Reminiscing the days of yore  
The departed is a bequeather in some tradition  
Like 'who gon' inhold the down south acre land?  
Who gon' drive the relic Mercedes Benz?  
Mostly a verbal dispute begins here  
Where sabre-toothed words emerge  
Only deadlock stand still until  
The hand of fate grabs another kin  
From the war of possessing the beguest  
Literary the death are introverts  
God bless the dead

- By Harrison Omambia

*The departed is a bequeather  
in some tradition  
Like 'who gon' inhold the  
down south acre land?  
Who gon' drive the relic  
Mercedes Benz?*



# Inger-Mari Aikio



## Inger-Mari Aikio's poem in English and Sámi

just when you  
finally see sharply  
comes the dull axe of age  
cuts down memory's branches

aiddo go olmmoš  
oaidnigoahtá bastilit  
hovkkehuvvama meres  
čuollagoahtá muittu ovssiid

Inger was born in 1961 in Ohcejohka/Utsjoki, lives in Sámiland, North Finland. She is a poet, writer, translator and director and producer of documentary films and music videos. Before she had worked as a journalist, radio host and reporter.

Published 6 poem books in Sámi: Gollebiekkatalmmidievva (1989), Jiehkivuolderuonasgiđđa (1993), Silkeguobbara lákca (1995), Máilmmis dása (2001), Camera Poetica - Suonat (2008) and Beaivváš čuohká gaba – Aurinko juo kermaa (2014).

Translations in English, Spanish, Norwegian, German, Hungarian, Finnish, French, Arabic and Bulgarian.

Trilingual poem book Roaddi – Rosa Boreal – Boreal Rose (2016) published in Sami, English and Spanish.

Published 2 children's books and a novel for teens and young adults in Sámi:  
Riebana bihpporgáhkut (2006), Čáhcerávga gazza (2011) and Tropihka rievssat (2016).

Lyrics for 45 recorded songs.  
Directed 12 music videos and 11 documentary films.

Nominated for Nordic Literature Prize (2004)  
Skábmagovat Film Award (2013) and State Award for Children's culture (2015).





# J. K. IHALAINEN



FINLAND

**Poet, translator, publisher, bookmaker. J. K. Ihalainen  
born 1957, Tampere Finland.**

Since 1978, Ihalainen has written 33 books of poetry in Finnish, English, Danish and Swedish. He has written 10 books (f.ex.) about Mongolia, History of Wends, Arthur Rimbaud, Primitive money, Dwellings of Nomads and Eurasian Ethnopoetics. He has translated 10 books of poetry of the following authors: Paul Bowles, Gary Snyder, Jerome Rothenberg, Patti Smith, Diane di Prima, John Cage and Ethnopoetics.

He has his own printing and Publishing House, Palladium Kirjat, in Siuro, Finland. He was awarded with the Eino Leino Prize in 2010 (Finland). He did his first poetry reading in Cothenburg Poetry Festival in 1984 and 1985. Later on he did readings in U.S.S.R, Romania, Albania, Norway, Turkey, Italy, Latvia and Holland.

Since 1992 he has been performing his poetry with musicians in Finland. He has published 4 CD's with Hungarian Sándor Vály. Ihalainen is the organizer of an annual Annikki Poetry Festival in Tampere since 2003.

Translations of his poetry:

Swedish: Den Europeiska Dödsboken, translator Martin Enckell, Palladium Kirjat, Tampere 1996;

Hungarian: Európai halottaskönyv, Pluralica, 2014 (translated by Sándor Vály); Turkish: translated by Riitta Cankacok, coming out 2018.

## The Making of Finnish Poetry Epic

### Abstract:

In early 1820s, there was an urgent social need to find the poetic work in Finnish language. There was a wide range of work done by the collectors of Finnish legends and songs, and one of the collectors, Elias Lönnrot, made a Poetry Epic Kalevala out of that material in 1835.

When the Kalevala appeared in print for the first time, Finland had been an autonomous Grand Duchy under Russia for a quarter of a century. Prior to this, until 1809, Finland had been a part of the Swedish empire.

The Kalevala marked an important turning point for Finnish-language culture and caused a stir abroad, as well. It brought a small, unknown people to the attention of other Europeans, and bolstered the Finns' self-confidence and faith in the possibilities of the Finnish language and culture. The Kalevala began to be called the Finnish national epic.

Lönnrot published a second, expanded version of the Kalevala in 1849. This New Kalevala is the version which has been read in Finland ever since and upon which most translations are based.

Some national epics have received their written form due to the work of just one person. The Kalevala is such an epic. The book was a landmark on the road towards Finland's independence in 1917.

## Poem

- By J. K. Ihalainen

Did you read the News today?

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei brought from Lesbos to Berlin

14 000 bright orange life jackets

used by thousands of refugees.

Can Europe stay afloat with those vests?

O Europe, I am missing your black and white postcards,  
your smoky cafes and bars, I miss your everlasting insomnia!

Pinch me out of sleep, it is the year 2016!

Has it really been 68 years since the Berlin Blockade?

This side of the border and beyond is shifting  
through the startled mirror people come and go,  
cautiously fumbling, following rumours,  
no one reached the destination yet, everything unfinished,  
a bone of contention or an apple of discord,  
eternal question, where is east?  
where is west?

# Joanna Lundberg



Joanna Lundberg (born 1978) is a visual artist, writer, poet and photographer based in Oslo, Norway. She has a Master of Fine Art degree (MFA) from The Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, Norway. She was born in Stockholm, Sweden, and moved to Norway in 2001, where she has since lived and worked.

Joanna Lundberg has exhibited her visual art works in different countries, such as Norway, Sweden, Finland and Scotland. She has been a student at the Nordic writing schools Skrivekunstakademiet i Bergen (the Writing Academy in Bergen, Norway) and Biskops-Arnöförfattarskola (the writing school in Biskops-Arnö, Sweden) and has attended the feminist writing course Häxskolan (The Witch School) held by the Swedish writer Johanne Lykke Holm and Danish poet Olga Ravn.

Joanna Lundberg's work has appeared in several literary publications and magazines, such as Skrivekunstakademiets "Stemmer fra Sardinfabrikken" ("Voices from the Sardine Factory", published 2015). She has attended various literature readings in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Lundberg has written interviews about literature and art for magazines. Her poetry and prose approaches themes such as family and close family relations, reflecting on memory, childhood, mental illness and domestic violence.

## *Almost a Letter*

you lost the silver bracelet you  
were given by your father silver darkens  
with time narrow like forgetfulness here  
the low-rise buildings sit tight  
nearby oak trees stand few and far  
between cavities open themselves they say  
water overflows once in a while  
we arrive nowhere  
the occult diary on the table  
my father read Noren's diaries the days  
before he slipped into psychosis  
the pages  
as thin as bible paper I didn't realise  
that loosing his senses was his way of  
showing tenderness

- By **Joanna Lundberg**,  
Translated by **Mai Ivfjäll**





## **DISTURBANCES**

I keep stopping, leaning my ear against the window,  
the rails.

No more subway humming, conversation  
buzzing,  
The small burps and swallowing from  
Fellow passengers, knitting pins crackling,  
The song of bassoons.

There is a sound beneath the sound.

The girders in the tunnels  
and the arches on bridges  
transmit messages to me.

I wish I were more than one,  
so that I could stretch out, form an air sail  
and decode the world.

- By **Joanna Rzakowska**,  
From "Luftmensch" (2016)

Translated by **Hilde Susan Jægtnes**

# JOANNA RZADKOWSKA



NORWAY

Joanna Rzakowska was born in Poland in 1986. She came to Norway in 1992, and lives currently in Oslo. She works as a school psychologist. In addition she writes and translates poetry from Polish to English. She has written two science fiction poetry collections: Repetition Compulsion in 2012 and Luftmensch in 2016, both at Solum Bokvennen Publishing House. She has recently translated the poems of the Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert to Norwegian.







# Some Good

(for Senator Lynn Beyak)

Haida eyebrows raised 55 feet tall  
Well intentioned story pole reconciled  
appalled by blonde apologist  
four provinces away  
speaks of good deeds overshadowed  
shadowed under brutal nuns and priests  
who did not mean to steal children  
beat cut defile baptize  
bury hungry bones beneath presidential schools  
new names carried in prayer  
to white god and restless peace  
truth buried in stiff tongues  
lodged in broken skin  
defensive wounds on saints in habits  
tufts of warm hair braid white fists  
this is good  
when deeds the weight of paper  
are more sacred than crimson cemeteries swollen with gently  
euthanized children  
thin bones dressed in cold earth  
drum songs of honour  
she is wood to vibrations dancing her seat  
small ghosts play with her yellow hair  
living Indigens stand before pale eyes invisible  
tell stories she cannot swallow  
an abundance of genocide kindly overlooked

- Karen Lee © 2017

# Karen Lee



poet / vocalist / actor / voice over artist

*“I love sound.  
I specialize in voice.  
I articulate creative  
vision.”*

Karen Lee is most captivated by Voice. Sound. Beat. A lyric-driven storyteller, devoted to social justice, reclaiming voice against tyrannies that silence. With sound / dub / spoken word poetry and vocals, she sings journeys into indigenous memory to heal colonial injury; probe wound, challenge systems that deny African woman-ness. As a voice over artist, vocalist and musician, her credits span live, solo, session, choral, wedding, theatre, film, TV, radio, commercials and new media, internationally and locally including Jamaican-Creole, Japanese and English.

As an educator, she has taught conversational and business English to hundreds of students of all ages, always incorporating inclusion, feminism, anti-oppressive practice and music. With a focus on diction and performance, she has also coached students of voice and music. Karen Lee yearns for more sacred knowledge of her West African and Jamaican roots to inform her writing, performance practice and lifelong quest for development as an artist.

Rewind My Selecta! And Naked are published in Black Girl Talk (Sister Vision Press), 1995.

# Kjersti Bjørkmo



NORWAY

Kjersti Bjørkmo is a Norwegian poet, based in Oslo, Norway. She was born in the Lofoten Islands north of the Arctic Circle and grew up in Tromsø, the world's northernmost university town. She studied phonetics and linguistics at the University of Bergen and 'Spanish language studies and Latin American studies' in Bergen, Norway and in Quito, Ecuador. Besides her profession as a poet, she works for a Norwegian non profit foundation whose paramount object is to protect and promote freedom of expression and the environment for freedom of expression by encouraging lively debate and the dauntless use of the free word.

Bjørkmo's debut poetry collection «Jegharprøvdå blivenn med dyrene» («I've tried making friends with animals») was published by Cappelen Damm - one of Norway's leading publishing houses - in 2014. It was said that «A surprising and strong use of imagery characterizes Bjørkmo's poems. When used to explore classic themes, such as loneliness, alienation, memories and so on, the poems expand and give a nostalgic sense of poetic delight», and the collection was well received by critics. Kjersti Bjørkmo's published literary works also include numerous poems in anthologies and in school books, song lyrics, essays and poems in newspapers and literary publications. She has, since her debut, frequently been invited to Norway's festival scenes where she has participated with readings, poetry talks and lectures. Her more recent work displays a humorous side of poetry as well as she continues to explore life's more unbearable serious emotions, with what one critic characterised as «a wonderful, weird and surprising imagery».



## Beskjed

Livet mitt blevridduavposisjon.  
Jegvillefortelleomdet i et brev,  
menskriftenvilleikkeholdeordenepåplass.  
Sidenharjeghørtlyderfraveggene.  
Jegharfunnetmørkemerkerpåkjellergulvet.  
Sporsomligner min egenskrift.  
Etfuktig, lite pattedyr  
må ha tuslet over betongen.  
Detfinnestegnpåsavn i huset.  
En genser over en stolrygg.  
Bevegelsen i etermenårvarmenforlaterstoffet.  
Eller en munn  
når den siermunn.

## Message

My life was twisted out of joint.  
I wanted to write about it in a letter,  
but the writing couldn't keep the words in place.  
Since then, I keep hearing sounds from the walls.  
I have found dark spots on the basement floor.  
Traces that look like my own writing.  
A moist, small mammal  
must have scurried across the concrete.  
There are signs of longing in the house.  
A sweater flung across the back rest of a chair.  
The movement in a sleeve as body heat escapes the fabric.  
Or a mouth  
as it utters mouth.

- By Kjersti Bjørkmo



# Krystyna Lenkowska

**POLAND**

Krystyna Lenkowska is a Polish writer and translator. She has published one novel, twelve volumes of poetry and one CD. Three of her books have appeared in Poland in the bilingual Polish-English editions: *Keep off the Primroses* (1999), *Eve's Choice* (2005) and *An Overdue Letter to a Pimpley Angel* (2014), one - in the Polish-Ukrainian edition: *Care* (Lvov 2014) and two - in the Polish-French editions: *Fragment de dialogue* (2017 L'Harmattan, Paris, France) and *Carte Orange* (2017 Kraków, Poland). Her poems, fragments of prose, translations, essays, literary notes and interviews have been published in numerous journals and anthologies in many countries of Europe, North and South America and Asia. Her poem "The Eye of John Keats in Rome" won the first prize at the Sarajevo international poetry competition "Seeking for a Poem" for the year 2012. In 2013, Lenkowska received the MENADA prize at the XVII International Festival of Poetry DITET E NAIMIT (Macedonia-Albania). One of her poems has been included in one of the most representative anthology of Polish contemporary poetry "SCATTERING THE DARK. AN ANTHOLOGY OF POLISH WOMEN POETS" (White Pine Press 2016, Buffalo - New York). Her translations of poems by Emily Dickinson, the Brontës as well as the contemporary poets, have been published in the literary Polish journals and books. Lenkowska is a member of the Association of Polish Writers (SPP) and Movimiento Poetas del Mundo.

## Epiphany

I was left

all alone in the crowd  
dazzled by my loneliness  
filled with the void whose  
antinomy I didn't predict

as if a monstrous rose  
petal had slid  
off my head  
across my back to the Achilles'  
heels  
as if I stood here  
trapped: naked and bald—  
hairless stripped  
of my tentacles which  
outside the filaments of light  
nuzzle  
inside

I was touched by sudden  
useless  
tenderness.

**-By Krystyna Lenkowska,**  
Translated from Polish to English by **Ewa Hryniewicz-Yarbrough**



# Magdalena Sørensen



SWEDEN

Magdalena Sørensen was born in 1977, in Stockholm, Sweden. She holds a Master's degree in French and Literature.

Magdalena Sørensen works as a literary translator from French and English to Swedish. Among her authors are: Isabelle Baladine, Marguerite Duras, Édouard Glissant, Jocelyne Saucier, Simone de Beauvoir and Joan Didion. Having a special interest in Canadian fiction, she is the editor and translator of an anthology of Canadian Short Stories (published in 2015). She teaches Literary Translation at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Her chapbook, *Trouble Shooting*, was published in 2011, by Naissance.



## The Original Poem

Harhailaan lähikaupan käytävillä. Nappaillaan ilmasta kiinni väsyneistä käsistä putoavia esineitä. Puhelimia, posliini- ja lasiastioita. Kuljetetaan näköhermon lähtöpisteen läpi kymmenittäin hyllymetrejä. Ei ole totta se, mikä katoaa.

Ei ole harhaa se, mikä toistuu. Valkoinen lampaanmuotoinen tyyny kirjoituspöytäsi alla on kissa, joka kerta, kun katse osuu siihen. Yhä uudelleen työpöydän alla tuhannesosasekunnin tunnistaminen ja täydellinen kuva aivoissa.

Kuten viereisestä huoneesta äkillisesti purkautuva kirkuva miehen huuto. Ruumis on valmis jo ennen äänen syntymää. Ei ymmärrä maailmaa, jossa ihmisääni ei ole läsnäolon riittävä ehto.

## The English Translation

We wander the aisles of the corner store. We grab objects from midair that are dropping from tired hands. Telephones, dishes of porcelain and glass. Tens of meters of shelf space are transported through the starting point of the optic nerve. That which disappears is not true.

That which repeats is not an illusion. The white, sheep-shaped pillow below your desk is a cat every time one's gaze falls upon it. Over and over again, under the desk, recognition in one-thousandth of a second and a complete picture in the brain.

Like the sudden eruption of screaming man's cry from the next room. The body is ready before the sound is born. It does not understand a world where the human voice is not a sufficient condition for existence.

- By Magdalena Sørensen



## THE ORIGINAL POEM

Harhailaan lähikaupan käytävillä. Nappaillaan ilmasta kiinni väsyneistä käsistä putoavia esineitä.  
Puhelimia, posliini- ja lasiastioita. Kuljetetaan näköhermon lähtöpisteen läpi kymmenittäin hyllymetrejä.  
Ei ole totta se, mikä katoaa.  
Ei ole harhaa se, mikä toistuu. Valkoinen lampaanmuotoinen tyyny kirjoituspöytäsi alla on kissa, joka kerta, kun katse osuu siihen. Yhä uudelleen työpöydän alla tuhannesosasekunnin tunnistaminen ja täydellinen kuva aivoissa.  
Kuten viereisestä huoneesta äkillisesti purkautuva kirkuva miehen huuto. Ruumis on valmis jo ennen äänen syntymää. Ei ymmärrä maailmaa, jossa ihmisääni ei ole läsnäolon riittävä ehto.

## THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We wander the aisles of the corner store. We grab objects from midair that are dropping from tired hands.  
Telephones, dishes of porcelain and glass. Tens of meters of shelf space are transported through the starting point of the optic nerve. That which disappears is not true. That which repeats is not an illusion. The white, sheep-shaped pillow below your desk is a cat every time one's gaze falls upon it. Over and over again, under the desk, recognition in one-thousandth of a second and a complete picture in the brain.  
Like the sudden eruption of screaming man's cry from the next room. The body is ready before the sound is born. It does not understand a world where the human voice is not a sufficient condition for existence.

# Mari Laaksonen



Mari Laaksonen (1986) is Finnish poet and performer. Laaksonen has published two poetry collections, Galleria Noesis (ntamo 2013) and elämännielemä (ntamo 2016). She won the Finnish Poetry Slam Championship in 2013 and was a semifinalist in Poetry Slam Coupe de Monde in Paris the following year. Last years she's been on working multi-art poetry performances.

# DR. MOLLY JOSEPH



Dr. Molly Joseph was born in 1956 as the daughter of teacher parents, the late M. M. Joseph and the late Annamma Joseph in the serene village of Kongorpilly, Kerala. She grew up among three brothers, got married to Mr.Xavier Gregory, and has a happy family, son Greg Xavier (wife Meera, son Noah) and daughter Sneha Xavier (husband Binil, son Aiden).

Dr.Molly Joseph, (M.A., M.Phil., PGDTE, EFLU, Hyderabad) had her Doctorate in Post War American Poetry. She retired as the H.O.D., Department of English, St.Xavier's College, Aluva, Kerala, and now works as Professor, Communicative English at FISAT, Kerala. She has thirty eight years of teaching experience and serves as Teacher Trainer, Recruiter, and Subject Expert. She is a reputed Orator and Social Activist working for the less privileged.

She writes travelogues, poems and short stories. She has published four books of poems - Aching Melodies, December Dews, Autumn Leaves and Myna's Musings. She is a Bilingual Poet, and writes in Malayalam and English. She is a poet columnist in Spill Words, the international Online Journal. She has been awarded Kala Prathibha by Chithrasala Film Society, Kerala and Prathibha Puraskaram by Aksharasthree, Malayalam group of poets, Kerala in 2018. Dr.Molly Joseph has been conferred Poiesis Award of Honour as one of the International Juries in the international award ceremonies conducted by Poiesis Online.com at Bangalore,



## This much.. Only this Much

Sunlight, you filter in  
through the cleavage of my heart,  
when, shutting out the world  
I merge with the chant, echoing the aisles...

You keep my tiny woes, suspended,  
dismissed, in your celestial ray that gushes forth...

I am clear now... I need this much  
only this much

Sunlight show me how you make the curled up  
bud, smile into blossom taking the world.full,  
you wake up the tired tree drooping,  
turning it into glossy green,  
it stands  
holding head, self assured...

I am what I am now, I need this much  
only this much..

- By Dr. Molly Joseph

*Sunlight show me how you make the curled up  
bud, smile into blossom taking the world.full,...*



# Neşe Yaşın



CYPRUS

NeşeYaşın was born in 1959 in Cyprus. She is a well known poet and read on both sides of divided Cyprus. Her poem called "Which Half?" that she wrote at the age of 17 was composed by the Greek Cypriot composer Marios Tokas and became an icon of identity, an unofficial anthem for a united Cyprus. She has published eight volumes of poetry, one novel and a research book on literature. Selections from her poetry has been translated to more than 30 languages, published in literary magazines and anthologies in different countries. A selection from her poems have been published in English translation with the title "Rose Falling Into Night". She has participated in poetry festivals and readings around the world. Among others she received the Anthias



## Memory of the Rose

The winds of forgetfulness  
Erase the footprints of time  
a person is at most a gaze  
and a secret held in that gaze

A great memory is a great forgetting  
the sorrow of the candle melting at night  
the lie that lives till evening prayers  
the soul in flames

Was that us  
were we there  
or not

I search your eyes  
for the ghosts of memory

You're silent  
silence is thirst  
among the gardens of the heart  
every story is untrue when told by another

I wrote a history  
our history  
the withered rose only remembers  
the moment it was cut from the branch

**-By NeşeYaşın,**  
Translated by **Clifford Endres**



# Patrick Woodcock



CANADA

(Canadian poet volunteering and writing in Arusha, Tanzania)

Patrick Woodcock is the author of 9 books of poetry and countless reviews. His work has been translated and published in 15 languages. Since travel is so essential to his work, Mr. Woodcock has lived and worked in such diverse countries as Iceland, Poland, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Sultanate of Oman, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, The Kurdish North of Iraq and Azerbaijan. Within Canada he has travelled from the West to East coasts, as well as working as a volunteer for almost a year with the elders of Fort Good Hope, NT - 20km south of the Arctic Circle. His seventh book *Always Die Before Your Mother* was shortlisted for Canada's ReLit award in 2010 and reached the number one spot on the *Globe and Mail's* bestseller list. His 8th book, *Echo Gods and Silent Mountains*, was extremely well reviewed all over the world and was called "...the most beautiful, deep and touching collection of poetry written on Kurds by a non-Kurd." by the Kurdish media network, Rudaw. He has read at International poetry festivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Slovenia, the Kurdish North of Iraq, Azerbaijan, England, The Republic of Georgia and Canada's Winnipeg International Writers Festival. While living in Colombia he read at the Ibague Poetry Festival, The XVIII Medellin International Poetry Festival and was the first poet from outside of Latin America to ever read at the Bogota Poetry Festival. Patrick's ninth book of poetry, *You can't bury them all*, which is set in the Kurdish North of Iraq, Fort Good Hope, NT Canada and Azerbaijan was published by ECW Press in 2016. *You can't bury them all* won the Alcuin Society Book Design Award for Poetry and was shortlisted for the JM Abraham Poetry Award in 2017. Patrick now lives in Arusha, Tanzania where he is volunteering at Baraa Primary School, Arusha, while completing his new book of poetry *Farhang* (ECW Press, 2021). Because his work can never escape the politics of where he resides, he is also a member of PEN Canada.

## Siyamand's "The Forgotten of Binavy" tour

Underwater, if violence is water,  
blinded by sandstorms born of the  
fallen.  
There is no colour or coloured  
deception,  
just beige in our blood and beige in  
the air.

The old school has one wall, falling,  
ungabled.  
The house of my father was  
somewhere near here.  
Most doors are sun ravaged, of odd  
bonded metal;  
the irrigation pond is where men cool  
their beer.

The cemetery's headstones are  
scattered,  
misshapen—some are as small as  
the palm  
of my hand. Smaller than infants,  
some  
battered, some hidden, as if none  
ever mattered  
or walked on this land.

- By Patrick Woodcock  
**From *You can't bury them all* pg9  
(ECW Press, Canada 2017)**



## PROF. DARIUSZ TOMASZ LEBIODA

POLAND

Dariusz Tomasz Lebioda Ph.D. – Polish poet, writer, literature professor, translator, editor, was born in Bydgoszcz, Poland in 1958. He was Visiting Professor of The State University of New York at Buffalo – SUNY (2002) and longtime researcher at Polish universities and colleges. He is the author of more than eighty (80) books of poetry, short stories, novels, diaries, essays, scientific monographs of European romantic poets, contemporary Polish poets (Miłosz, Herbert, Szymborska, Różewicz) and world novelists (Faulkner, Caldwell, Golding, Singer, Murdoch, Pármuk, Coetzee, Naipaul, Lessing, Le Clézio). He is the winner of a lot of Polish literary prizes: that of Andrzej Bursa's Award, Stanisław Wyspiański's Award, UNESCO Prize of International Day of Poetry, Ianicus Award and Bruno's Award. He is the leading poet of the New Generations in Poland – poets born between 1950 and 1960. His books have been translated into many languages – English, French, German, Spanish, Armenian, Arabic, Russian, Chinese and many more. He has been guest of many world literary festivals, including those in the United States, Belgium, Iraq, China, Armenia, Georgia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. From the year 2015, he has been the President of European Medal Of Poetry And Art – HOMER.

## PRINCESS

Sits lost in thought and stares at the nearby  
lights of Columbus Circle

her beauty is inexpressible her countenance  
defies description

in the days of queen Hatsheput she could  
have been a grand dame or a dancer with  
a golden girdle on her hips

but here she responses on the grass  
her long fingers stroking its green blades  
she floats far beyond this place  
out of reach of time and space

her life will follow its own path while my  
own days shall come to an end

only once did we rub against one another only  
once did our reflections shimmer in each other's  
eyes

like the wind – carried pollen of plants  
like the sparkling highlights on the feathers  
of an American thrush

- By Dariusz Tomasz Lebioda

*her beauty is  
inexpressible  
her countenance  
defies description*



A close-up portrait of a woman with dark hair and green eyes, wearing a grey wool coat with a high collar and buttons. The text 'Professor Erika Martínez' is overlaid on a dark grey rounded rectangle in the lower-left corner of the image.

# Professor Erika Martínez



SPAIN

## **POETRY AND ORALITY IN HUMBERTO AK'ABAL. THE MAYA QUICHE POETRY AND ITS TRANSATLANTIC RECEPTION**

Erika Martínez (University of Granada, Spain)

### **ABSTRACT**

How do indigenous cultures conceive the word? Should things die, as Hegel said, to enter into the being of language? Far from our abstract concept of words as signs (Pierce and Saussure), indigenous cultures have tended to consider words as living entities, active realities that, as Luis Alfonso Barragán points out, maintain a unique and necessary relationship with what they name. The words vibrate at a sonorous, spiritual and material level, joining the name with the named. From this point of view, to speak is to be a world and a badly spoken word can be the beginning of death. The word, then, is understood as a living entity, which intervenes actively in the way in which situations can occur, in which life can develop. A responsibility of speech is posed, since its action is the very creation of the world (2016, 342-355). Walter Benjamin distinguished of two types of language: the one that reproduces and the one that creates. In the second, the act of the word gives life to things because it listens to them and can thus name them. In this paper, we will analyze the meaning in Latin America of basic concepts such as “oralitura” and “ethnoliterature”, in order to get closer to the work of the Maya Quiche poet Humberto Ak'abal.

**Keywords:** oral literature; ethnoliterature; Maya Quiche poetry, Humberto Ak'abal.

## ADVICE

–Speak with anyone,  
do not they think that we are voiceless,  
grandpa told me.  
–And please, be careful  
that they do not turn you another.

Humberto Ak'abal

### Introduction: oral literature and ethno-literature

The progressive visibility of indigenous literature in academic circles has come to destabilize the canon of the different Latin American national literatures, both synchronically and diachronically. As Toro Henao (2014) points out, the approach from cultural studies to oral traditions requires their specific consideration as repositories of a folk function and not only aesthetics. Although it can be said that every literary work intervenes, in one way or another, in social cohesion and the preservation of collective memory, these functions are an essential part of oral literature. This link between collective memory and orality is what the mapuche poet Elicura Chihuailaf baptizes as “oralitura”:

The Word held in the memory, moved by it, from the speaking of the source that flows in the communities. The written word not as a mere linguistic device (I am not referring to the function of linguistic artifice that all language contains permanently) but as a commitment in the present of Dream and Memory (cit. Fierro and Geeregat, 78).

Or:

Oral writing is writing on the edge of orality, on the edge of the thinking of our elders and, through them, of our ancestors. That's how I lived it / I heard it, so I'm living / listening: I tell myself, they tell me, they're telling me, they'll tell me, they told me. All this sprouting from a conception of circular time: we are present because we are past (we have memory) and that is why we are future (2005).

We must not forget, on the other hand, that oral literature is –as Friedemann points out– an African neologism invented by Yoro Fall in 1992 to talk about the narratives of this continent. For Barragán (2016) it is important to remember that the “oralitura” is a different genre in itself. A genre that depends on literature and orality, but at the same time maintains a critical distance from both: “Its material effects –structuring endogenous literary production– and symbolic –detritorialization and reterritorialization of the word– could be what Nestor García Canclini called hybrid literatures (García Canclini) because they are presented to us as strategies for the entrance, representation and negotiation of modernity” (347-348).

Walter Ong, meanwhile, discusses the term “oral literature”, considering that the etymological origin of the word “littera” points to writing in Latin. He proposes, therefore, the replacement of the term with other expressions such as “exclusively oral artistic forms” or “verbal artistic forms”.

These artistic forms would be in Latin America the result of the confluence of indigenous traditions, oral traditions of Spanish ancestors and Afro-descendants. Faced with this intercultural orality, Toro Henao (2014) points out the existence of an intracultural orality, which would arise from contact with the written tradition, giving rise to a reworking that Nina S. de Friedemann has called “ethnoliterature”.

This interculturality and intraculturality would work like what Hommi Bhabha calls “life on the edges” and consists in the emergence of the clandestine creativity of certain groups or dissident, dispersed individuals, who live on the margins, far from politics, and break out disrupting the national culture. There emerges what Bhabha calls “interstitial moment”, in which “something begins to appear” and advances from the periphery, as an anomalous and anonymous practice that is difficult to understand from our categories and therefore illegible (see Barragán, 2016). For Enrique Ballón Aguirre, oral traditions can be divided into two categories: ancestral (in case they were produced by indigenous communities) and popular (that is, produced by the people, not institutionalized and antagonistic of the so-called “high literature”). Ballón Aguirre points out the existence of motifs or thematic units made discursively in the form of what he calls *motifemas* and that would imply a resemantization on the part of the communities that create the fixed themes. The semiolinguistic organization of these motives would attend to its discursive, narrative and axiological organization, following the method developed by Vladimir Propp and Claude Lévi-Strauss. The main challenge of oral studies, says Martin Lienhard, is the link of these writing practices with non-scriptural ways of doing, such as ritual or ceremonial. Luis Alfonso Barragán points out that:

It is in the emergence of those interstices where the indigenous scriptural practices have positioned themselves and have begun to burden the cultural and literary tradition of the nation with a high ambivalence: an ambivalence that arises from the need to build new territories around the exercise of what literary - virtual, imagined, dreamed, but concrete and material, directly related to the possibility to inhabit them, to occupy them and live them - that are much more imprecise and transitory; more heterogeneous, mobile and inclusive. This exercise necessarily involves a very particular appropriation and use of the word, which is not understood as a simple abstract sign, but is endowed with a particular “power” that also has to do with the way in which it is used; otherwise, we can say that there is an ethos of speech in which adequate and inadequate uses of the word are planted: word that preserves and creates or word that produces misery and forgetfulness (2016, 342).

Nowadays, in their public readings, a huge number of Maya Quiche poets use sound, musical, visual and mimic resources from their ritual traditions, including sounds from natural environment. This has produced a destabilization of our framework of literary understanding inviting us to indigenize “the literate city”, as Ángel Rama put it. These indigenizing practices also come together with the contemporary resources of performance.

### To say the world: the poetry of Humberto Ak'abal

Considered one of the most singular and renewing voices of contemporary indigenous poetry, the Guatemalan poet Humberto Ak'abal published his first book of poems, *El animalero*, in 1990.

His work is composed of short texts that speak of how all the living forces of the nature breathe, celebrate, suffer, laugh and play in unison. Ak'abal was born in 1952 in a small mountainous town of weavers in Guatemala. Son of a peasant and illiterate family, he studied only elementary school and is, in the rest, self-taught. He was shepherd, a weaver of ponchos and left his town during the war to look for work in the capital, where he also worked as a sweeper, errand boy and construction worker. In an interview (2004b), he says that in the trash he found many books and that, over time, he managed to build a small personal library that started in a garbage dump in Guatemala. To that formation the musical one would be added on the part of grand fathers, and the oral narrative by the maternal side. Thanks to the bilingual edition of his work in Castilian/Maya Quiche, he has demonstrated the poetic scope of a non-hegemonic language. For this reason, he was awarded the National Literature Prize Miguel Ángel Asturias in 2004, prize that he rejected.

In the essay *The Indigenous America in his Literature*, Gordon Brotherston talks about what he calls the literatures of the Fourth World, making reference to other codes that would question the theories of evolution that, from Levi-Strauss's structuralism, impregnated the anthropological studies of the Amerindian cultures. Our vision of what constitutes writing or not, and our binary division between orality and letter is insufficient to approach the Amerindian literary legacy. In *Writing Without Words* or in *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, Walter Mignolo has made, for example, an analogy between the concept of book and writing in the European Middle Ages and Renaissance, and the glyph, the quipu (Inca knotted strings) or the Amerindian codices. Indigenous literature is not part of the past. The Mayan poet Cocom Pech (2006) distinguishes, therefore, different stages in his historiography: the prehispanic and monolingual stage (where myths, ceremonies and knowledge were combined); the indianist stage from the 16th to the 19th century (in contact with European religiosity, in conflict with idolatries and where the transmission of traditions still resists); and the indigenous stage at the beginning of the 20th century (where non-indigenous authors approached the indigenous culture and language); and a fourth stage of proper indigenous literature (written by indigenous people and where it would have been a transposition from orality to borrowed writing) (see Sánchez Martínez, 2007, 82). The latter would belong Humberto Ak'abal.

As Emanuela Jossa points out Humberto Ak'abal has developed throughout his work a progressive identification with the earth and its colors. According to the Mayan worldview, human beings reach their fullness thanks to their capacity for metamorphosis. The multiple proposed metamorphoses (in tree, bird, nest) do not intend to return to the lost unit, but to recognize it. Everything that lives follows a rhythm which establishes a cosmogonic dialogue. Things acquire an emotional, cognitive and communicative projection. The moon, for example, enters the houses, sits on the ground and becomes a children's shelter: "The moon was a large house sitting on the spine of the hill. When my dad scolded me, I went to the moon and there I slept" (1996, 99).

). In the book *Hojas rotas de tejedor de palabras*, the resistance of the Mayan people is their linguistic permanence. That is why Ak'abal not only speaks Maya Quiche, but also writes in that language, and then translates himself into Spanish. In his poems can be detected a poetic use of some peculiarities of Maya Quiche as the juxtaposition of words, the metaphorical construction of sentences, the translation of everyday life, present both in the ancient texts of the language as in those of the present. Emanuela Jossa writes:

Through the use of paired formulas, parallelism, iteration, the text creates a harmonious universe, based on the deep relationships between all beings.

Associations, synonyms, echoes create a semantic journey in which from the vegetable comes to the notion of God, from the animal to the notion of moral... Therefore, everything that surrounds the Mayans acquires familiar connotations and a deep awareness of belonging to a specific space (2013, 66).

The Maya Quiche language implies, as Rogachewskj says, a dialogue with, and not an appropriation of nature (1994, 25). The onomatopoeia is the most emblematic of its qualities because it captures not the senses, but directly the spirit. A sound, says Ak'abal, communicates the essence of its meaning. To name a bird in Maya Quiche is to imitate the sound it makes, that is, to invoke it. Onomatopoeia slips in music within everyday language. Ak'abal says in a 2004 interview that, when advice is given in Maya Quiche, you remember first the music and then the text. That's where his poetic texts are born. His orality is also very gesticulating, he says. The image comes to replace that visual resource. One of his best-known poems, "Bird songs", consists of an enumeration of the names of birds that also contain their song. As Juan Guillermo Sánchez (2007) points out, the reading of the poem produces an effect of estrangement in the voice of the reader, who "does" like the birds, becomes one of them and, for a moment, does not recognize himself. In Maya Quiche, a "house", for example, is not only an inanimate object: it has mouth, eyes, feet, hair, stomach, it is an autonomous organism. Jossa points out, in this regard, that this onomatopoeic character is present in the names of animals, but not only. The word "proj" reproduces the noise of the flames and means "fire", "tun" is the sound of the drum and its name (67). As this use of onomatopoeia demonstrates, the name is not for the Maya Quiche an instrument of identification, but is the very essence of what is named. Thus, to name oneself, says Jossa, is to found one's own identity and existence on earth: everything says "I am, I am" (Ak'abal 1996, 46). And whoever loses the name dies. Thus, in the poem "Without name" we can read: "I will not be able to forget the barking of the dogs when they ate the dead people that were left lying on the roads. The dogs also ate my name" (Ak'abal 1997, 137).

For the ancient Mayan text *Popol Vuh*, the word not only evokes, but also creates in the Benjamin's sense. There is also a contiguity between the exterior and the interior landscape. In "Leisure", Ak'abal writes: "The poet must fill gaps and create spaces. The poem will be complete" (2000, 50).

*Through the use of paired formulas, parallelism, iteration, the text creates a harmonious universe, based on the deep relationships between all beings.*



## Conclusions

As noted by Juan Guillermo Sánchez (2012), Ak'abal belongs to a generation that made indigenous poetry visible since the early 90s of the twentieth century, developing the valuable concept of "oralitura". His voice is also today the result of migrations in a post-national, intercultural and multilingual territory. Indigenous poetry can be read as parallel and at the same time alternative way to postmodern dispersion, which opens, however, to dialogue, demonstrating that the culture from which it proceeds is far from being mute or extinct (2007, 79). In the poem "The voice" Humberto Ak'abal writes (2004, 192):

The life of the mountains  
is in the voice of its birds.  
The voice of the people  
are their singers:  
a mute people  
is a dead people.

Perhaps that is why, in another poem (2000, 92), Ak'abal writes:

I speak  
to cover  
silence's  
mouth.

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# Prof. Marilena Zackheos



CYPRUS

Professor Marilena Zackheos is a scholar, poet, and music maker. She holds a BA in Philosophy and a BA in English Language and Literature from University of Virginia, an MA in English Studies from Queen Mary, University of London, as well as an MPhil and a PhD in English from George Washington University. She has published on postcolonial literary and cultural studies, psychoanalysis and trauma, gender and sexuality. She is co-editor of *Vile Women: Female Evil in Fact, Fiction, and Mythology* (2014), *From Cyprus With Love* (2016) and *Education in a Multicultural Cyprus* (2017). Other recent work includes a co-authored chapter on Nicosia's emerging queer art scene in *Contemporary Art in Cyprus: Politics, Identity and Culture Across Borders* (forthcoming, 2018) and an article titled "Revisiting Female Intimacy in Luz María Umpierre-Herrera's *The Margarita Poems*" in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* (2016). Her research addresses representations of individual and community identity in print and non-print texts, investigating specifically the intersections between trauma, gender, sexuality, and the nation. She is Director of the Cyprus Center for Intercultural Studies and Assistant Professor of Social Sciences at the University of Nicosia. In turn, Dr. Zackheos is a member of the following non-profits: Write Cy, Cyprus Academic Dialogue, and the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research. She is also a member of the Culture and Memory Task Group of the Cyprus Dialogue Forum. Her first poetry collection *Carmine Lullabies* was published in February 2016. Her music album *Oh My* was released in March 2017 under the band name *Grendel Babies*.



## Joyless Officer Stormy Stan

(a poem from the forthcoming sequence titled "Arizona")

Joyless Officer Stormy Stan  
ordered a search in the shoemaker's workroom.

Cockeyed Quick-Pistol  
Costa hid a gun  
underneath  
his coal-black apron.

On his lap, the piece rested  
while officers knocked over  
wicker baskets  
and hundred-year-old terracotta pots  
for wine production  
passed down in the family.

Gramps carried on  
assembling  
his strips of leather

but you can bet your boots  
he could have shot them at point-blank.

- By Marilena Zackheos

40 KISTRECH2018

“

*On  
his lap,  
the piece  
rested while  
officers  
knocked over  
wicker  
baskets*

”



# Prof. Orlando Cerasuolo



Orlando Cerasuolo is an archaeologist who studies and researches on the European and Mediterranean ancient history. He was born in Rome, Italy, in 1977 and studied at the Sapienza University. After completing his PhD he was post-Doctoral Fellow first in Greece (Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene), then in the USA (University at Buffalo SUNY), where he also taught courses on the archaeological evidence of inequality.

Orlando has directed about hundred archaeological excavations, field projects and study projects in Italy, Greece, Turkey and Uzbekistan. He has published more than fifty papers, both academic and for the general public, and in 2006 and 2007 he received two prizes for research works. He has presented his researches in international conferences in Italy, USA, Great Britain, Ireland, Greece, Turkey, Netherlands and Uzbekistan.

Orlando is currently Professor of Etruscan and Pre-Roman Archaeology at the Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale". At the same time he works as the Scientific Director of the Virtual Archaeological Museum of Narce in Mazzano Romano.

His research focuses are mainly devoted to the long range interactions between different civilizations, that produced the encounter and mutual enrichment of different cultures, in a process that has been called 'creolization' or 'hybridization'; and that has much in common with what happens in the modern globalized world. He is interested in developing multi-layered analyses grounded on all the classes of the archaeological evidence (literary sources, pottery, architecture, painting, customs, etc.). At the same time, in order to improve the general awareness about the past, Orlando designs and directs public engagement and school projects for the heritage, exhibitions and services for the visitors.

In the spare time Orlando likes to explore the world of open data, to create things with digital manufacturing, to ride the bike and hike.

During this year's Kistrech festival, Orlando will present an academic paper titled, "Another me: Ancient Mediterranean Masks in Rituals and Theater." In this paper he will address the use of masks during ritual performances in ancient Greece and Italy, as well as their role in the earliest forms of theater. He will provide 3D printed copies of ancient Etruscan votive masks to display or use.

**Orlando has directed about hundred archaeological excavations, field projects and study projects in Italy, Greece, Turkey and Uzbekistan.**



# Prof. Vim Nadera



PHILIPPINES



Victor Emmanuel Daelo Carmelo Nadera Jr. is a Professor 3 from the University of the Philippines Diliman on secondment. As the Director IV of the Philippine High School for the Arts, his programs and projects include *Peryani Andres* (2013); *Makiling Inter-Cultural Arts Festival* (2014); *Arawng PHSA* (2014), *Bayaning Sining* (2014) with The Outstanding Students of the Philippines Inc.; the Rice Awareness Project (2014) with the United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the electrification of the National Arts Center in Mt. Makiling, Los Baños, and the establishment of a PHSA Campus in Bay, Laguna.

Together with his wife Ellay, he founded the Foundation AWIT (Advancing Wellness, Instruction, and Talents) Inc. in 2008 after their four-year old son Awit, who had Global Developmental Delay, succumbed to pneumonia.

Vim is recognized internationally when he became a South East Asia Write Awardee (2006) as well as nationally when he was chosen as one of The Outstanding Young Men (2003) and recipient of the Gawad Balagtas (1998) from the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino. In Manila, he twice received the *Patnubayng Sining* at Kalinangan -- for Theater (2014) and for Literature (2010).

As a poet, he became the youngest Poet of the Year (1985) who also won the National Centennial Commission Literary Prize for Epiko (1998); *Gantimpalang Collantes*, *Talaang Ginto for Tula* (1994 and 1992); National Book Award (1995); Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature for *Tula* (1992); Carlos Bulosan Award for *Tula* (1990). As an essayist, he bagged *Gantimpalang Collantes*, *Talaang Ginto for Sanaysay* (1996) and Cultural Center of the Philippines Grant for *Sanaysay* (1994). As a playwright, he was given the Cultural Center of the Philippines Grant for Playwriting (1992). As filmmaker, he got the MOWELFUND Film and Video Grant (1990). As a novelist, he received the Juan C. Laya Award for Best Novel in Filipino (2007) and the National Centennial Commission Literary Prize for the *Nobela* (1998). On 30 December 2015, during the 119th Rizal Day celebration, he was recognized by his hometown in Tayabas City for being one of the *Unyonng mga Manunulatsa Pilipinas' Gawad Pambansang Alagad ni Francisco Balagtas* (2015).

He collaborated with Elmer Borlongan who created *letras y figuras* using iPad in his poetry collection *Rizalpabeto* (The Center for Art, New Ventures, and Sustainable Development, 2012). In his *Kayumanggi* (UST Publishing House, 2011), Vim's poems are turned into wearable art by Lorina Javier, photographed by Dominique James, set into music by FerÉdilo, designed by Mannet Villariba, and translated by Arvin Mangohig, Vic Nierva, and Francis Quina. The said publication sent him to Bangkok to accept the SEA Write Award from the King of Thailand in 2006. Digital artist and photographer Pinggot Zulueta and layout artist Albert Gamos helped him come up with his poetry anthology *Asinta: Mga Tula at Tudla* (UST Publishing House, 2002). In 2008, composer Paul Val Peña turned some of those poems into songs in the compact disc *Katoto*. His novel *[H]ISTORYADOR[A]* (UP Press, 2006) and epic *Mujer Indigena* (UP Press, 2000) placed second in the Centennial Literary Prize in 1998. In 1994, two of his poetry books were nominated to the National Book Award but his *15 Lamang* (De La Salle University Press, 1994) was luckier than his *ALIT: Dalit Galit Halit Malit Ngalit Palit Salit* (Anvil Publishing House, 1994).

His masteral thesis was published as *Poetreat: The Use of Poetry as a Therapy in Mutual Support Groups of Cancer Survivors in Metro Manila* (UST Publishing House, 2006). His dissertation was concluded with his poems about rice put together as songs by alternative music icon Joey Ayala and other respected artists like Dong Abay, Cynthia Alexander, Onie Badiang, Noel Cabangon, Lourde de Veyra and Radioactive Sago Project, Frank Englis, Junn Esteban, Maricris Joaquin, Popong Landero, Jun Latonio, Sheilbert O Manuel, Errol Marabiles, Malou Matute, Pio Pataganao, Ira Penalosa, Traicy Christi Tarongoy, Irma Tegasantos, Rene Tegasantos, and Mary Katherine Trangco-Cabral who joined forces in the CD called *Palay, Bigas, Kanin*.

He, too, is a performer. As a performance artist, he represented the Philippines in art festivals in South Korea (2013), Germany (2013), Thailand (2012 and 2006), United States (2011), Japan (2010), Singapore (2008 and 2002), Taiwan (2007, 2006, and 2001), and Malaysia (2001 and 2000). As a *lakandiwa*, he is the V in the *Balagtas* team -- MTV -- with M or Mike Coroza and T or Teo Antonio who were invited here and abroad, particularly to the Filipino American Book Festival 1 and 2 in San Francisco Library and the Union City Hall, both in California, and to the Bowery Poetry Club in New York.



# Public Information and Health Education Service

-By Vim Nadera

You rapped a reply to the tune of Pasyon,  
an answer to my answer of Nancy who?  
(Drew? My question for this mystery.)  
Nancy... Judas slips and breaks his shin...

Loses 3 hairs from his chinny chin chin!  
Your knock-knock jokes are as corny  
As the tinkle-piss in slow mo that you do.  
Like the corny porny style of your hairdo.

You were curly on the day we met.  
(Strutting down a flight-from-Tokyo jet.)  
You were showing off your Ph.D.:  
Pubic hair-do! Lucky you, luckily

Babette is off the air, gone for good,  
so you're safe from that collector's hobby.  
But not from your libidinous hubby  
-- who made the three of us feel good.

(And guilty. Like goats we got so horny  
so we gottalottahotta rendezvous.)  
Fuck you! Enough of your chastity rap.  
You fucking faker! Enough o' dat crap!

Don't start with your crying games.  
Keep up the self-pity and shame,  
You might go bald, lose more hair,  
vomit blood, catch typhus from the air.

Or maybe hydrocephalus. No?  
If I were you, it's all systems go!  
Give money. I'll make you holy.)  
Your future, your present, your past.

My future, my present, my past.  
Or how you and me became we.  
Through radio, newspapers and TV,  
brochures, comics, placards, or books

Whole truth. And nothing but the truth.  
Do stress I'm as serious as can be.  
(That I am no Mr. Shooli.)  
Let everyone hear of this truth.

Girl, boy, bakla, tomboy.  
Whether crowd-A types, or crowd E.  
From Aparri down to Jolo.  
Forget you? Never ever, baby.

So far, you got nothing to cure you.  
Just friendly reminders. Memos.  
As in Memorial. As in Memory.  
It depends on the point of attacks.

'S okay, if you wanna flashback,  
talk of your son who died for me.  
Like you. A dead and deadly widow.  
Until you get featured in PROBE.

Or, you can sound like Dr. Ruth.  
(or maybe a guy from the WHO.)  
If anyone raises a doubt, let's ST-  
ST them 'til they're Rock

Hudsonned from transfusion or drugs.  
Celibacy, Monogamy, Trust Express  
Are our palliatives that we use.  
We are the viruses of the Lord.

Which is why your humble servant  
is here. To protect you.  
Against your promiscuity.  
I'm your friend. Not your foe. Ask Ashe.

Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust.  
Call it karma. Or irony  
of Confucius. Or nature's law.  
Call me an agent, an emissary,  
an ambassador of goodwill.  
Just doing my job, folks.



# Nyagemi Bwocha



KENYA

## Necessity

It is sweet to live, they say life is sweet-short  
It is sweet to labor, work transcends idleness  
The short journey of life punctuates youth with hope  
The long journey of life punctuates old age with remembrance  
Of death and labor, could one choose?

I've seen life and its escapades  
I've seen life and its vicissitudes  
The joy of lovers cuddling  
The gloom of lovers parting  
Of death and labor, could one choose?

Life starts like a farmer planting seed  
Life expires like a farmer plucking fruit  
The glamour of childhood radiates sweetness  
Soon youth calls in with adventurous eagerness  
Of death and labor, could one choose?

The children must be provided for  
Fed clothed educated nursed  
Adulthood is worries, which is also misery  
Punctuated with diminishing agility and industry  
Of death and labor, could one choose?

All over again, life must be repeated  
A seed must be buried in the soil  
The seed must germinate and sprout  
Repeating the life again which is also renewal  
Since death and labor are of necessity not choice.

- By Bwocha Nyagemi



# Nyagemi Nyamwaro Mabuka



KENYA

## KITANZI SI SULUHU!

Zingazidi changamoto, nakuusia mwanangu,  
Hali ikawa ni moto, ivumilie mwanangu,  
Mwisho itatimu ndoto, sitamauke mwanangu,  
Kitanzi hicho mwanangu, si suluhisho ni kifo.  
Tuliza yako mawazo, pata fahamu mwanangu,  
Kuishi sio mchezo, kuna kanuni mwanangu,  
Ipo mingi miongozo, chagua upi mwanangu,  
Kitanzi hicho mwanangu, si suluhisho ni kifo.  
Kukosa au kupata, ni kilimwengu mwanangu,  
Leo hauna mafuta, umeparara mwanangu,  
Kesho itameremeta, wacha minuno mwanangu,  
Kitanzi hicho mwanangu, si suluhisho ni kifo.  
Kwamba umekosa karo, sare ya shule mwanangu,  
Ukata ukawa kero, si saratani mwanangu,  
Ya kitumwa minyororo, itafunguka mwanangu,  
Kitanzi hicho mwanangu, si suluhisho ni kifo.  
Unasoma huelewi, ya vitabuni mwanangu,  
Masito hawi kiziwi, elewa hilo mwanangu,  
Huwa hayawi hayawi, bora subira mwangu,  
Kitanzi hicho mwanangu, si suluhisho ni kifo.  
Mkamilifu ni Mungu, sijilaumi mwanangu,  
Mja ni kasoro chungu, si peke yako mwanangu,  
Yasikutie machungu, mapungufuyo mwanangu,  
Kitanzi hicho mwanangu, si suluhisho ni kifo.  
Twaishi kijanjanja, dunia hii mwanangu,  
Tabu hazijatuchinja, twazikabili mwanangu,  
Tamu na chungu kuonja, ni kidunia mwanangu,  
Kitanzi hicho mwanangu, si suluhisho ni kifo.  
Koo linanikauka, wacha nitue mwanangu,  
Yangu hayo ukishika, utakwamuka mwanangu,  
Wacha nyingi patashika, kujisumbua mwanangu,  
Kitanzi hicho mwanangu, si suluhisho ni kifo.

*"malenga wa migombani"*

**Nyagemi Nyamwaro Mabuka, Kanda ya Ziwa Kuu**



# Sona Van



USA

Sona Van, poet/ essayist is an Armenian medical school graduate who later received a master's degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Santa Monica in USA. She spent nearly fifteen years of her early career as one of the pioneer AIDS researchers at Kaiser Hospital, Los Angeles. Later, with her husband, Dr. Noobar Janoian, Sona Van founded All For Health -- a non-profit medical group which has grown to encompass fourteen different locations providing free healthcare to the indigent population of Los Angeles and its surrounding communities. She is also a sustaining member and contributor to one of the first Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation centers to be established in her native country, Armenia. Despite her significant devotion to healthcare and mental health, nowadays, she is best known for, and most significantly involved in her literary career. She is the author of seven books of poetry that have been translated into fourteen different languages around the world by renowned authors and literary icons of their respective nations. Sona Van is the recipient of several accolades in honor of her work. She is particularly revered in her homeland, having been awarded the Nation's most prestigious honors bestowed upon a writer. These include the Gold Medals awarded by the Ministry of Culture and the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora; the gold medal from the Golden Apricot Film Festival and the highest Presidential Honor, the "Movses Khorenatsi Medal" for her contribution in preserving the Armenian identity abroad. Her local Glendale Chamber of Commerce recognized her with its "Woman in Literature" distinction in 2013. In 2017, she was awarded Homer's medal in poetry from the European Union and recipient of the International award of Clément Lanicus in Poland. Sona Van is also the co-founder and editor of, 'Narcis', literary magazine in Armenia, since 2006. Sona Van's latest book, *Libretto for the Desert*, dedicated to the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, has been acclaimed as one of the most significant modern works on the subject of this historical atrocity. The book has been acknowledged not only by readers and literary critics alike, but also by authorities dedicated to human rights, including U.S. Senator, Adam Schiff, writer, historian, academic, and human rights activist, Raul Ahuron, and Turkish writer, publisher, and political activist, Ragip Zarakolu, who, despite severe harassment, published this book's Turkish translation in Turkey in 2016. His publishing house has been subject to Turkey's regressive Article 301 laws that broadly ban publication of materials that insult the Turkish Republic. It was forcefully shut down, with many of the books in its facilities having been confiscated. Translations in German, Chinese and French languages will be published by the end of 2018. Sona Van's work beckons dialogue. As such, she is considered to be the most widely discussed contemporary Armenian author by literary critics in Armenia and abroad. Sona Van lives in US with her family since 1978.



## Dance on the Sand

I whirl on the sand  
drawing circles with the edge of my skirt  
I purr with my skin—my mouth closed  
"I am debauched like old Rome"

I am half-woman half-cat in this moment  
my elegance is not mere show but it has purpose  
my dance is not mere exercise but it's a stairwell  
that spirals me up to heaven

like a young Aztec who thirsts for death  
I will fight with my colorful feathered arrows  
and maybe fall after a thousand years  
(like Rome)  
but I'll never be defeated on a battlefield

my elegance is not a mere show . . .  
it's my ancestors' battle cry  
a feline tattoo on my face . . . reprisal . . . instinct . . .  
all the circles on the ground are signs  
brought from a distant place—the past  
the circle has no beginning and no end  
an eternity hanging from the edge of my skirt  
it's not easy, if not impossible, to defeat me . . .  
I belong to the tribe . . . of dancers

- By Sona Van

# Soraya Peerbaya



## Craigflower Schoolhouse

What is given only in fragments.  
Kelly turned to him, Warren said. A gaze. A grin.

We followed her across the bridge.

Then Kelly asked Reena  
to remove her jacket, her clog boots.

What is given is an old schoolhouse, milk-washed, white  
clapboard siding. A green hill. A school bell, iron-  
tongued. - Did Reena say anything? - I don't remember.  
- Did you? Did Kelly? - I don't remember. Green,  
gossamer with dew. Clogs in the grass. A Garry  
oak tree, leaves turning. - So the assault took place  
in silence? - Words were being said, but I don't remember  
what they were. - Who was saying the words?

The way the hill shied down toward the Gorge.  
Green. A bell, salvaged from a wrecked steamship.  
Moon gloss on her clogs; buckles and rivets; in the creases  
of her pleather jacket. What did they want? Not  
for her to be on her knees; they waited, Warren said,  
for her to unbend, to stand. - When she gave up her clogs,  
did she seem afraid? - I don't remember. - You can't see  
her face? - I can see her face, but it's blank to me.

The same events given, the same withheld. A white  
schoolhouse. A green hill. A toll bridge.

-By Soraya Peerbaya

Soraya Peerbaya's first collection of poetry, *Poems for the Advisory Committee on Antarctic Names*, was nominated for the Gerald Lampert Award. Her poems have appeared in *Red Silk: An Anthology of South Asian Women Poets*, the chapbook anthology *Translating Horses*, and Canadian literary journals. Her book, *Tell: Poems for a Girlhood*, won the 2016 Trillium Book Award for Poetry and was nominated for the Griffin Poetry Prize. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph.



# SYTSE JANSMA



THE NETHERLANDS

Sytse Jansma lives in Harlingen, which is in the northern part of the Netherlands. This province is called 'Friesland' and has its own language (Frisian). He is a bilingual poet (Frisian/Dutch) and has published two poetry bundles and one picture book for children. He is also an animator/filmmaker and works as an educator at a theatre company. More info: [www.sytsejansma.nl](http://www.sytsejansma.nl)

English:

## phallus' summer nights

along rustling reeds the ditch is stacking octaves  
as waves repeating the night rolls itself in

a braid of shouting frogs the bedroom window  
ajar a summer of sweat is waiting above the

knot in the mosquito net the pantomime movements  
of ditch water invite a school of damselflies to float

as hot-blooded kabuki dancers in the afternoon  
the hindquarters stood up as obelisks hilarious

phallus' summer nights smell like teen spirit  
brewing as excited cheerleaders' voices

Frisian:

## fallussimmernachten

lâns risseljend reid steapelet de sleat oktaven  
as weagen werheljend de nacht draait himsels yn

in frisling fan roppende frosken it sliepkeamersrút  
op in kier in simmer fan swit wachtet boppe de

knoop yn 'e klamboe it pantomime bewegen  
fan sleatswetter noeget in skoalle reidjuffers om

as djoenske kabûkidûnsers te sweevjen oerdei stiene  
de efterliven as obelisken oerein dolkomyske

fallussimmernachten smell like teen spirit  
dat it broeit as hite cheerleaderstimmen

Dutch:

## fallusozomernachten

langs ritselend riet stapelt de sloot octaven  
als golven herhalend de nacht draait zichzelf in

een vlechtwerk van roepende vorsen het slaapkamerraam  
op een kier een zomer van zweet wacht boven de

knoop in de klamboe het pantomime bewegen  
van slootwater nodigt een school waterjuffers om

als heetbloedige kaboekidansers te zweven overdag stonden  
de achterlijven als obelisken omhoog dolkomische

- By Sytse Jansma



# TONY MOCHAMA



Tony Mochama (born in '75) is a journalist and popular columnist with the Standard Media Group. He is the author of ten books in different genres – from 'Nairobi – The Night Runner' to the crime noir 'Princess Adhis & the Najja Coca Brodas'; as well as a collection of poetry ('The Literary Gangsta;') a poetry text book for high schools, and the latest being a collection of travel poems titled '28 Days in Venice.'

Tony has been a participating poet or writer in residence not just at the great Kisii Kistrech Poetry festival, but also in Ourense, Montreal, London, Lisbon, Bayreuth, Saint Petersburg (Russia), Venice and Vienna, across the years.

He has won multiple literary awards, from the Burt Award for YA writing, the Leap Frog Press Prize, the Sanaa Awards as well as the continental Morland Miles Scholarship Award.

## END APRIL.

There's a wolf in the rib cage howling to be let out;  
like a drop of doubt that grows into a drought of  
ideas so that the dawn becomes a barren horizon,  
and May, yonder, something to brazenly ponder,  
with fear; the way dry powder may not fire,  
at the critical point at the end of a bayo-net.  
The way a small fish, gleefully leaping out of a pond  
may find its joyful arch interrupted by a sea gull  
a streak of speed/swept away in a gale of talon

- By Tony Mochama



# Zoltán Lesi



Zoltán Lesi (Hungary, 1982) lives and writes in Vienna/Austria and Budapest/Hungary. From 2001 to 2006, he studied software engineering at University of Szeged/Hungary. His diploma thesis was a software that analyzes poems.

He has published two books of poetry: *Daphnis ketskéi* (Daphnis' goat) (FISZ, 2009), *Merül* (Diving) (JAK-Prae, 2014) and the children's book *Karton és Matild – A zombimentők* (Karton and Matild – The zombiesaver) (Móra Publishing House, 2017). His poetry is translated to German, English, Serbian and Polish. He has numerous publications in literary magazines.

Zoltán Lesi translates German and Austrian literature and organizes a literature exchange program between Austrian and Hungarian authors. He is editor of the common World literature Series of the Jelenkor Publishing House and Young Writers Associations. In 2016, he was distinguished with the Zsigmond Móricz and Akademie Schloss Solitude Scholarship.

## The Sukhumi Colony

The Sukhumi Colony was a Soviet experimental lab training space monkeys: eight of them made it into orbit.

The females they impregnated with Stalin's sperm, to build the glorious Soviet future. I was one of them but I was born

too late to volunteer for Mars. When the separatists turned the town upside down, I got out. I dragged them off, the doctors experimenting on me, and locked them in a cage. Told them till they built me a spaceship they'd have nothing to eat but their own blood.

Later, I rounded up people from other cities, too, for the project. From time to time I would show them I was King Kong, so they'd behave. But now it seems of all things the flu's going to finish me off before the launch site can be completed.

- By Zoltán Lesi,  
Translations by Marc Baczoni



*too late to  
volunteer for Mars.  
When the separatists  
turned the town  
upside down*

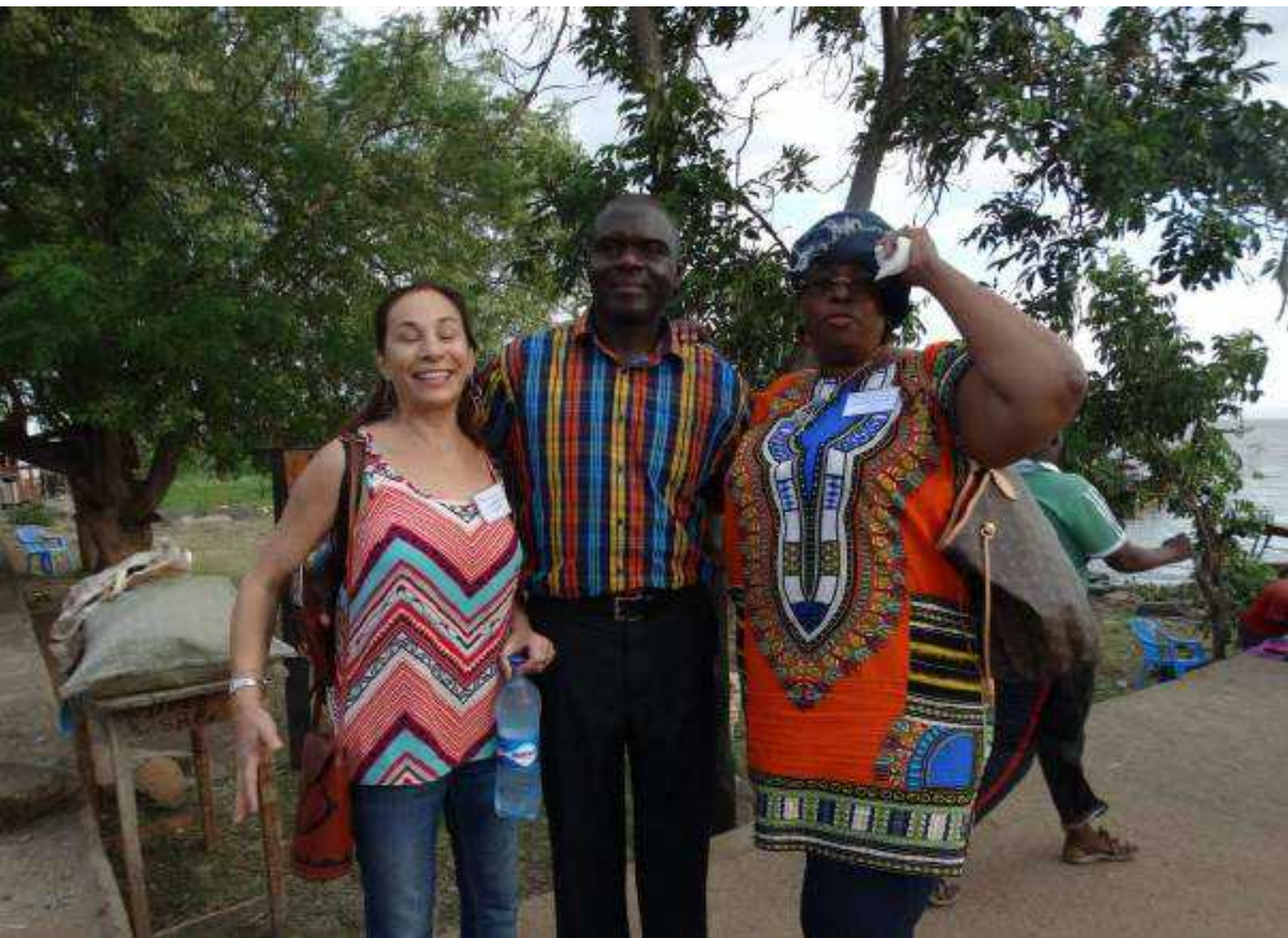




# Kistrech Poetry Festival 2017











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