

kistrech

**Kistrech Poetry Festival
Kenya 2017, Vol.5**

5th Edition | 2nd – 9th October 2017



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MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR EMBASSY OF ISRAEL-NAIROBI

MESSAGE FROM H.E. NOAH GAL GENDLER

Jamho,

Israel is rich in creative talent; great innovative art and designs decorate the entrances of cities, and murals beautify nearly every flat surface. It only seems natural, then, that the Israel poetry space is so well populated that it is difficult task to choose only five. Hebrew is the language of Israel and Hebrew poetry has been written without interruption from biblical times to the present. The poetry of the past embodies external influences and internal traditions while incorporating religious and national themes where poets played a major role voicing the hardships and joys during Israel's founding.

Today, the poetry scene is more diverse, much like the land itself, containing motifs coming from the many cultures Jews have lived in during 2000 years of exile.

It is with great honor and pleasure that the Embassy of Israel in Nairobi participates in the 5th edition of Kistrech International Poetry Festival in Kenya.

In support of the festival, the Embassy brought Amir Or Aviel, a renowned Israel poet who combines the mysteries of the spirit with the joys of the flesh, curious about mythology while carefully examining the Hebrew language to participate.

This support is orchestrated by our believe that art is a need and thus impacts greatly upon our social, economic, political and cultural lives.

Poetry is not just a linguistic gesture but serves a social function. It helps to reinforce values in our society. It also adds beauty to the world, a world that is still far from being perfect and encourages us to pave a way towards a better one.

This festival is an important event for all artists: upcoming poets, student poets, rappers and spoken-word artists. The event provides an opportunity for upcoming poets to acquire skills from established poets as well as act as a platform on which established poets support the beginners and acquire raw materials for their poetry. The festival is a way of portraying the other side of Israel, beyond the commonly known technological, agricultural and security advancement but rather highlight the cultural and softer side of our nation.

This in tune is to strengthen the bilateral relations between Israel and Kenya forging forward to many more different aspects of our nations.

We look forward to participating in many more future edition of the festival which we are certain will be getting better and better.

I, therefore, wish all of you an enjoyable festival, healthy interactions and a mutual learning from one another.

Asante sana: Shalom.

AMBASSADOR
Embassy of Israel Nairobi.



H.E. NOAH GAL GENDLER

Ambassador,
Embassy of Israel Nairobi

MESSAGE FROM THE PATRON

Welcome to the 5th edition of Kistrech International Poetry Festival in Kenya. Kisii University has become a lasting partner of this event. For the 4th year running, we have supported this festival in terms of transport, lunch, venue, and the publication of the festival's almanac. We thank NORLA, Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus, One Single Rose, Goethe institut and the Israel Embassy for joining us in supporting this event. We urge other art organizations around the world to also lend a hand.

Our assistance is based on the belief that any support given to art is support to humanity. Art in its very nature promotes quality of life. It has scientifically been proved that visual expression, listening to music, writing a good poem, or reading a good piece, adds benefits to life: it improves personal growth and wellness. Art has also been proven to be therapeutic. The integration of art in our education systems and into our daily lives can, therefore, result into better outcomes.

Poetry played a big role in the preliterate society in Africa. The Abagusii people, the community where I hail from, for instance, used to formulate lyrics or classical poetry called *emeino*. *Emeino* enforced values, served as a reservoir for our history, informed the economic, political and cultural aspects of our community. *Emeino*, unlike other oral poetry of the Abagusii, did not accept improvisations: A poet could not subtract or add his/her own flavour to the lyrics as he/she did to other forms of our oral poetry. *Emeino* were fixed classical poems and were to be sung the way they were composed by the poet. *Emeino* were sung by old people, usually men when partying. Young people and women did not compose or sing them.

The composition of *emeino* was called *okabinera emeino*. This term is derived from the word *okobina*, which refers to the labour pain a woman experiences when giving birth. The composition and singing of *emeino* was thus equated to this pain since it required a lot of effort in meditating and arranging the poem. In the absence of paper, pen and computer, the poet depended on memory in his composition and singing, which was very difficult and posed a lot of challenges.

The sad part of the story is that every old man in the community was expected to know how to compose and sing *emeino*. He was expected to use the creative language of the people. It was unfortunate for a man who could not *kobina emeino*, who could not compose a poem. Such a man was despised and ridiculed for not knowing how to speak in the creative language of his people. The following poem, 'Osangore Emeino N'ebitonga,' which I am about to sing states the importance with which our people, the Abagusii, held poetry.

Eee onye aye tochi meino
Ogende o'Kwamboka o'Miranyi
Eee onye aye tochi meino
Ogende o'Kwamboka o'Miranyi

Ogende o'Kwamboka o'Miranyi
Osangore emeino n'ebitonga

Ogende o'Kwamboka o'Miranyi
Osangore emeino n'ebitonga

N'ebitonga
N'ebitonga
Osangore emeino n'ebitonga



N'ebitonga
N'ebitonga
Osangore emeino n'ebitonga

Oralya-a, oralya-a
Chingero bonyangero-ta!

This classical poem ridicules an old man who could not compose and sing *emeino*, the Abagusii classical poetry. The poem tells him that, since he could not speak the beautiful language of the people, he better go and acquire this skill from Kwamboka, a woman in the community. In those days, for a man to be referred to a woman to seek wisdom, or skills in poetry composition, was in itself humiliating. One was considered as a no-body. Not man enough.

To complete my speech, let me reiterate the importance of poetry to humanity. To do so, let me quote from Percy Bysshe Shelley's 1821 essay, A Defence of Poetry. Here the author states that:

"Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought: it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things"

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Kistrech Poetry Festival began as a small event in 2013. In that year we received a handful of poets. Since then the festival has grown in leaps and bounds, attracting big names in poetry circles. The festival has definitely become one of Africa's biggest literary events. We thank the poets who have made this happen. To pay for their accommodation and food –something we should provide as a festival – is in itself a sacrifice. It is an enormous commitment and devotion to art and humanity.

This year's event is spiced with the participation of student-poets and local spoken-word artists. The inclusion of a visit to Maasai Mara Game Reserve adds flavour and excitement to the event. We also shall be joining, for the first time, Misango International Arts Festival in Kisumu City. Hotels and institutions around the venue have also expressed interest to host us to read and perform poetry in their places.

We thank the Kisii University for their continued support for the last five years. The institution has been able to provide stationeries, ground transport during the festival, lunch for our poets, venue, as well as funding the festival's magazine. We are glad this year that the Israel Embassy is giving a small support to this event, as well as sponsoring the Israel poet, Amir Or. We also thank the Goethe Institut for supporting the two German artists, Nora Gorringer & Philipp Scholz. We recognize the continued support given to us by NORLA (Norwegian Literature Abroad) who, in 2016, supported the Norwegian poet, Gunnar Wearness, and this year, funds the participation of Hilde Susan Jaegtnes. We are glad that Netherlands Literature Foundation was able to fund the Dutch poet, Hagar Peeters, in 2016 but could not do so again this year due to the inability of the festival to provide food and accommodation to poets. The Dutch organization's sponsorship is pegged on the condition that a festival to which Dutch poets participate should be able to provide food and accommodation—something we currently could not afford. I finally would like to recognize the sacrifice put forward by this year's participants who are paying most of their costs. Your participation is a great contribution to this festival, since without your financial effort, this event will not happen. Great thanks to you, poets. Enjoy the 2017 edition.



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2017 TEAM

Prof. John S. Akama - **Patron**
Christopher Okemwa - **Director**
Douglas Mong'are - **Hall**
Damiana Mwikali Kambo - **Publication**
Dr. George Nyandoro - **Programme**
Rodah Auni - **Programme**
Dr. Evans Gesura Mecha - **Programme**
Edna Kerubo Atambo - **Accommodation**
Felister Kerubo Onyando - **Information**
Lilian Kerubo Gisesa - **Information**
Henry Onyango Monyancha - **Tours / Visits**
Philip Pkorir Puyaka - **Lunch**

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Prof. John S. Akama (**Kisii University, Kenya**)
Prof. Anakalo Shitandi (**Kisi University, Kenya**)
Prof. Sukrita Paul kumar (**Delhi University, India**)
Dr. Matunda Nyanchama (**Nsemia Inc. Publishers**)
Dr. Herman Kiriama (**Kisii University, Kenya**)
Christopher Okemwa (**Kisii University, Kenya**)

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MESSAGE FROM THE GOETHE-INSTITUT

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach.

We promote knowledge of the German language abroad and foster international cultural cooperation. We convey a comprehensive image of Germany by providing information about cultural, social and political life in our nation. Our cultural and educational programmes encourage intercultural dialogue and enable cultural involvement. They strengthen the development of structures in civil society and foster worldwide mobility.

With our network of Goethe-Instituts, Goethe Centres, cultural societies, reading rooms and exam and language learning centres, we have been the first point of contact for many with Germany for over sixty years. Our long-lasting partnerships with leading institutions and individuals in over ninety countries create enduring trust in Germany. We are partners for all who actively engage with Germany and its culture, working independently and without political ties.

The Goethe-Institut in Kenya

One important goal of the Goethe-Institut Nairobi is to promote international cultural cooperation by organizing a broad variety of events to present German culture. We also support local artists seeking partnerships and collaborations with artists from Germany. This year, we are glad to have facilitated the participation of two German artists at the Kistrech Poetry Festival – Nora Goring and Philipp Scholz. The Goethe-Institut Nairobi offers workshops and teacher training seminars for teachers of German as a second language, and also provides an extensive examination programme. Learning about German life and culture is an integral part of our language courses.

The information centre of the Goethe-Institut Nairobi serves as a resource for those interested in contemporary Germany, and for those interested in teaching and studying German as a foreign language. More than 7,000 books, DVDs, CD-ROMs and computer software are available.



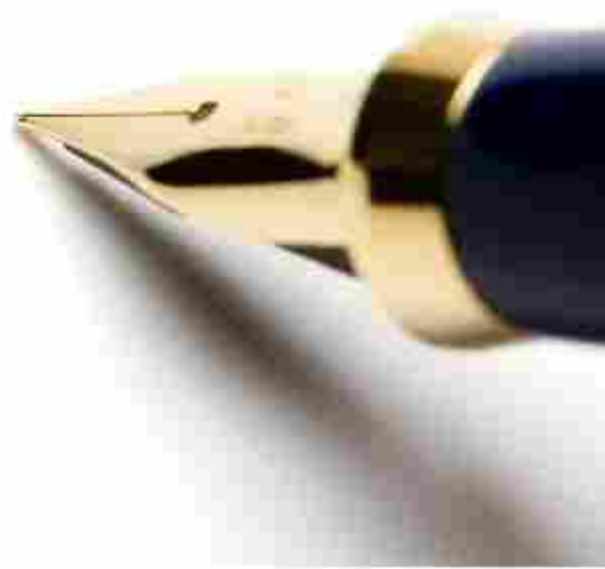
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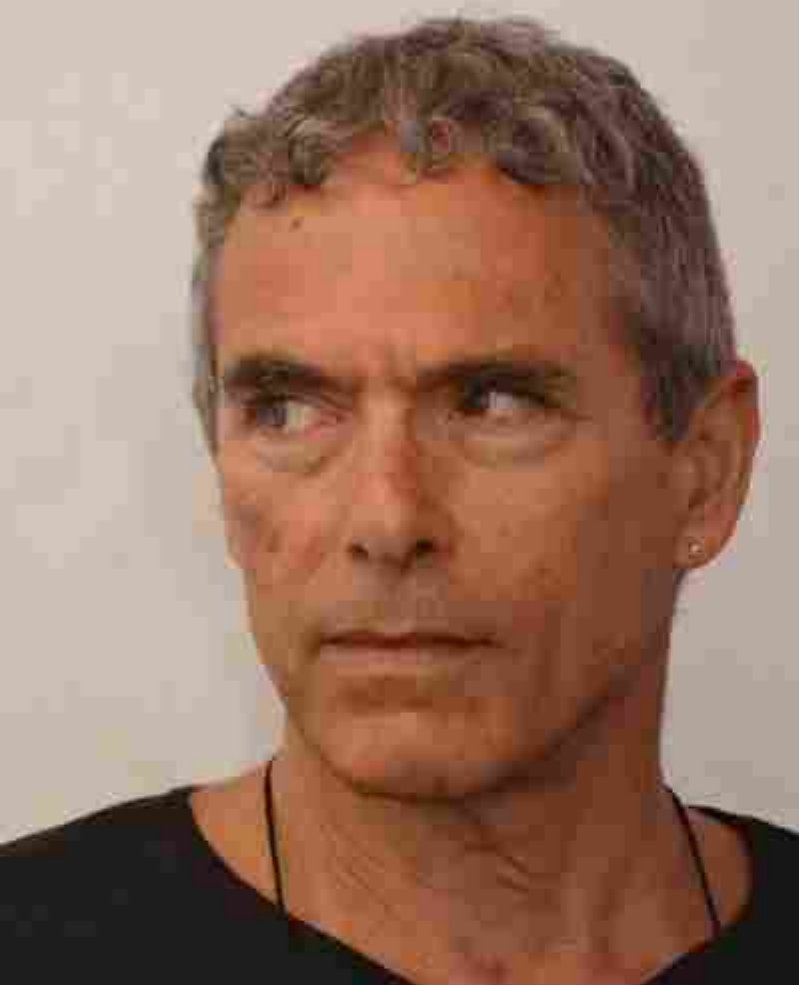
*We are partners for all who actively engage
with Germany and its culture,
working independently and without
political ties.*

OUR SPONSORS

We would like to thank sponsors of this year's festival. Much gratitude goes to Kisii University who are our main funder. The institution provides the venue, lunch, ground transport, stationeries and the festival magazine. The Israel Embassy, who are our second partner, funds the participation of the Israeli poet, Amir Or, and gives the festival a small support (USD 1,000). The NORLA (Norwegian Literature Abroad) supports the participation of the Norwegian poet, Hilde Susan Jaegtnes. Goethe Institut-Hairobi supports the German artists, Nora Gorringer and Philipp Scholz. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus pays costs of the poet, Lily Michaelides. The rest of the artists come to the event on their own. We would like to thank the poets and the above mentioned sponsors for their dedication and commitment to this event. When a poet is sponsored by the above mentioned agencies it is to the benefit and growth of this festival. All people benefits, including students, upcoming poets, foreign and local artists. That is why we place their logos on all our publications as a way of recognizing their support to the participating poets. Support given to the poets is support given to the festival.

*Thank
you*





Amir Or

ISRAEL

Amir Or, the Israeli poet, novelist and essayist, has been recognized as a major new generation voice in world literature. He is the author of eleven volumes of poetry, the latest being *Prophecy of the Madman* (2012), *Loot* – selected poems 1977–2013 (2013) and *Wings* (2015). His poems have been translated into more than forty languages, and have appeared in poetry journals, anthologies and literary sites, as well as in twenty three books in Europe, America and Asia. Among them are *Poem and Day* (English by Dedalus, Ireland, 2004, 2006,); *The Museum of Time* (English by Art Aark, 2009; Dutch, Azul Press 2012, Serbian, Arhipelag 2015), *Miracle/Milagro* (Spanish/English, Urpi Editores, U.S. 2011, Havana 2012), *Loot* (Serbian, Arhipelag Press 2012, 2014, Şiirden, Turkish 2014), *Le Musée du Temps* (Editions de l'Amandier, 2013), *Tredici Poesie* (Italian, Milan 2014) and *Dia Logos* (Art Aark 2015). His novels include *The Song of Tahira* (2001), a fictional epic in metered prose and *The Kingdom*, a novel about the life of King David.

He is a descendant of a renowned Rabbis dynasty, among them Elimelech of Lizhensk and Rashi, whose family line goes back to King David.

Or translated into Hebrew eight prose and poetry books, including *The Gospel of Thomas*; *Limb Loosening Desire*, an anthology of erotic Greek poetry and *Stories from the Mahabharata*; as well as modern poets like Seamus Heaney, Ann Sexton, Shuntaro Tanikawa, Jidi Majia, Fiona Sampson, and Ansatassis Vistonitis. His selected translations *Poetry of Many Poems* is published this year. For his translations from ancient Greek Or received the Honorary Prize of the Israeli Minister of Culture.

Or gave readings and lectured in dozens of festivals and conferences worldwide. He is the recipient of Israeli and international poetry awards, including the Pleiades tribute 2000 of the Struga Poetry festival for having made "a significant contribution to modern world poetry", the Fulbright Award for Writers, the Bernstein Prize, the Prime Minister's Poetry Prize, the Oeneumi literary prize 2010 of the Tetovo Poetry Festival, the Struga Wine Poetry prize 2013, the Stefan Mitrov Ljubisa International Award 2014 of The Budva City Theater and the European Atlas of Lyrics prize 2016; as well as Fellowships from the University of Iowa, the Jewish-Hebrew Centre of the University of Oxford, Fundación Valparaíso Spain, Hawthornden Castle Scotland, the Irish Heinrich Böll Foundation and others. Or gave readings and lectured in dozens of festivals and conferences worldwide; and has been a guest writer at several cultural institutions, among them the Literarische Colloquium Berlin, Chattanooga University and the Nihon University, Tokyo.

Or was born in Tel Aviv, 1956. His grandparents emigrated from Poland in the 1930's and came to Israel as Zionist pioneers. He is a descendant of a renowned Rabbis dynasty, among them Elimelech of Lizhensk and Rashi, whose family line goes back to King David.

Or founded a meditation and therapy centre and a spiritual commune in Jerusalem. He studied Philosophy and Comparative Religion in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and lectured there on Ancient Greek Religion.

He has published numerous papers, articles and essays on literature, society, comparative religion and the classics. In 1990 Or founded the Helicon Society for the Advancement of Poetry in Israel. In 1993 he set up the Arabic-Hebrew Helicon Poetry School and developed the school's pioneering integrated methodologies of teaching creative writing, and taught it in Israel, U.S., Austria, U.K. and Japan. Or has served as Editor-in-Chief of Helicon's journal and its series of poetry books. In 2001 he founded the Sha'ar International Poetry Festival and has been its Artistic Director. He is a founding member of the World Poetry Movement and of the European Association of Writing Programs. Or serves as editor of the Catuv poetry books series, as national editor of the international poetry magazines *Atlas* and *Blesok*, and as a national coordinator for the U.N. sponsored UPC venture, "Poets for Peace."

Orpheus Prayer

Death and yet more death.
We have stood in the square hungry to be
and, like mountain shadows,

covered the city with pictures of a waking
sleep.
Was she there or wasn't she?

A stranger in my body, able and yet unable,
I tried the air:
"How many more years will we walk these
dead sands?"

The mountain is glimpsed like a vision or a
mirage. Sands move on underfoot
like a memory with no beginning, and each
place is every place.

Does the way go up or down? Are you here,
behind my gaze?
Is my gaze there, ahead of me? Where have
we come from?

Alone, the two of us have crossed vast
marshes on the slowly melting faces of the
drowned.
For years we've been immortal.

In the attic, in Amsterdam, we saw terrible
sorrow in the window.
How much longer shall we walk between
death and death,
sand and sand?

A new past give us, a new death give us.
Give us this day the life of the day.

- by Amir Or.



ANSELM BERRIGAN

USA

Anselm Berrigan is a poet working in long, serial, and stand-alone forms, shaped to make space for language to operate on as many of its known and unknown levels as possible. He is the author of eight books of poetry, two collaborative books, and several chapbooks. Berrigan's books of poetry *Zero Star Hotel* (Edge, 2002); *Free Cell* (City Lights Books, 2009); *Notes from Irrelevance* (Wave Books, 2011); a selection from an ongoing series, *Pregrets* (Vagabond Press, 2014); the book-length scroll *Primitive State* (Edge, 2015); and *Come In Alone* (Wave Books, 2016), a book of poems composed out at the edge of the page. Berrigan is the Poetry Editor for *The Brooklyn Rail*, an arts and culture monthly. He co-edited *The Collected Poems of Ted Berrigan* (U. California, 2005) and the *Selected Poems of Ted Berrigan* (U. California, 2011) with his mother Alice Notley and brother Edmund Berrigan. He also edited *What Is Poetry?* (Just kidding, I know you know): Interviews from the Poetry Project Newsletter 1983-2009 (Wave Books, 2017). From 2003-2007 Berrigan was Artistic Director of The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church, where he also hosted the Wednesday Night Reading Series. He is Co-Chair, Writing at the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts interdisciplinary M.F.A. program, and also teaches part-time at Brooklyn College. Berrigan is a 2017 Grant Recipient in Poetry from The Foundation for Contemporary Arts.

He is the author of eight books of poetry, two collaborative books, and several chapbooks.



Pregrets by Anselm Berrigan

how much time wasted waiting to be loved
unable to identify any love coming, there's
the end, it can't even pretend to stop, words
collapse into your movement, a gym of gestures
you pay to sweat within, in honor of something
like extension, lines enter our ears, lines swim
before our faces, we enable brutality against
our wishes, which are barely known to us &
that's a lie, we're too many to know, & why isn't
a flower a star, if nothing else is available, you
can have your wise translations, you have them
already, your whole sense of truth is fed laterally
pity the applied ending, it's only a desperate face
commanding us to begin again, if the hook wasn't
sound I'd raise you off it, cleanse the little tear
with a list, or erstwhile fabricated substitute, like
the sweet powdered hard core from the blooming
old shit store, I was wrong to say lie up there, but
it's ok, we won't rule out a long term extension
as long as pure daylight stays out of the way



Ataul Behramoğlu

TURKEY

Ataul Behramoğlu was born in Istanbul. He graduated from the University of Ankara, Department of Russian Language and Literature. His first two collections of poems, published in 1965 and 1970. Between 1970-1974 he lived in Paris, London and Moscow. Fragments of his poem "One Day For Sure" was published in Les Lettres Françaises edited by Aragon. In 1975 in Istanbul he edited the monthly literary journal "Militant". A selection of his poetry was translated into Greek and published along with a laudatory attention of Yannis Ritsos (1981). Was arrested in March 1982 along with the other executive members of the Turkish Peace Association and kept in a military prison until November of the same year. He was awarded the Lotus Prize by the Afro-Asian Writers Union while in goal in 1982. On November 1983, at a session of the Turkish Peace Association trial which he did not attend, he was sentenced to 8 years hard labour followed by 32 months internal exile. He had to flee from the country to Paris where he stayed until 1989 when the sentence was dropped. In 1985, in French language the Turkish literary and cultural magazine "Anka" has began to be published under his direction. In 1988 a selection of his poems was translated and published in Hungary by the "Europa" Publishing House. Ataul Behramoğlu currently is a professor of Russian language and literature and also has his column as a literary and political commentator in the daily "Cumhuriyet". Besides his widespread popularity as a poet and writer, he is an eminent translator of the Pouchkine's, Lermontov's poetry and Chekov's plays. His poetry has been translated into many languages and awarded a number of national and international prizes.

I've learned some things

- BY ATAOL BEHRAMOĞLU

I've learned some things from having lived:
If you're alive, experience one thing with all your power
Your beloved should be worn out from being kissed
And you should drop exhausted from the smelling of a flower

A person can gaze at the sky for hours
Can gaze for hours at a bird, a child, the sea
To live on the earth is to become part of it
To strike down roots that won't pull free

If you cling to anything, tightly hold a friend
Fight for something with every muscle, whole body, all your passion
And if you lay yourself for a time on the warm beach
Let yourself rest like a grain of sand, a leaf, a stone

Distant lands should draw you, people you don't know
To read every book, know other's lives, you should be burning
Exchange nothing for a glass of water's joy
No matter how much the pleasure, fill your life with yearning

You should know sorrow, honorably, with all your being
Because the pains, like joys, make a person grow
Your blood should mingle in the great circulation of life
And in your veins, life's endless fresh blood should flow

I've learned some things from having lived:
If you're alive, experience largely, merge with rivers, heavens,
cosmos
For what we call living is a gift given to life
And life is a gift bestowed upon us



BRENDA MORAA MORARA

KENYA

Brenda Moraa Morara, known as Bree the poet, is 19 years old. She is a second year student at Kisii University, pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree in English & Literature. She is a spoken word poet and a theatre practitioner. She is the 2017 winner in the Kenyan cardiovascular health poetry competition in which poets from 36 counties participated. Brenda has written a hundred poems which she longs to publish. Brenda's mission is to inspire young poets and upcoming spoken-word artists by leading them to platforms where their talents can be showcased.

Make Me a Star

Make me a star and take me to the skies
Grab me before reality swallows me
Command silence to listen to me
Let me talk to the airs
Walk with me to the land of laughters
Blow the wind away from my sight
Shelter with me under the rains
Allow the thunder to strike our feet
Pick the moon and bring it to me
Feel my heart and count every beat of it
Outshine the sun and rise from the west
Stop the waves of the seas
Make the birds and the trees to sing my name....
and come...come and we shall play yoga under the
waters... come

- by Brenda Moraa Morara

**SHE IS THE 2017 WINNER
IN THE KENYAN CARDIOVASCULAR
HEALTH POETRY COMPETITION IN WHICH
POETS FROM 36 COUNTIES PARTICIPATED.**



CHRISTOPHER OKEMWA

KENYA

Christopher Okemwa's novel, *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* won the 2015 Burt Award for African Literature (Kenya). Okemwa is the founder and the current director of Kistrech International Poetry Festival in Kenya. He holds an MA degree in literature from the University of Nairobi. His doctoral study at Moi University in Kenya focuses on the 'Literary-Gangsta' Performance Poetry in Kenya. He currently teaches Creative Writing at Kisii University, Kenya.

He has published three collections of poetry: *Toxic Love* (2004, Watermark, USA), *The Gong* (2009, Nsemia Inc. Publishers, Canada) and a bilingual (French/English) poetry collection *Purgatorius Ignis* (2015, Nsemia Inc. Publishers & Poesie Premiere-Online). He has also authored and published three collections of children's stories: *The Village Queen*, *The Visitor at the Gate*, and *Let Us Keep Tiger* (2009, 2009, 2010, Paulines Africa). The latter was nominated for Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature in Kenya in 2011. Okemwa has also published a collection of adult short-stories, *Chubot, the Cursed One and Other Stories* (2011, Nsemia Inc.). His Oral Literature text, *Riddles of the Abagusii People of Kenya: Gems of Wisdom from the African Continent* was also published in 2011. His other oral literature text, *The Proverbs of the Abagusii of Kenya: Meaning & Application* was published in 2012. In 2014, Okemwa rolled out a series of twelve titles of Abagusii folktales, namely *Ogasusu na Oganchogu*, *Ogasusu na Okanyang'au*, *Ogasusu na Okanyambu*, *Ogasusu na Egetondo*, *Okabaki na Okanyambobe*, *Okang'ombe na Ogasimba*, *Ogasusu na Abana B'Oganchogu*, *Kerangeti na Kerantina*, *Nyamege na Omoiseke Omonda*, *Getiro na Rirabwoni*, *Abamura Batato* and *Omoiseke Omonyakieni*. In 2015 his novella, *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*, won Burt Award for African Literature.

Purgatorius Ignis

Hanging in this burning emptiness of retribution, between
Death and the final dwelling--in this condition of existence--
I move stealthily like a cat, perpetually on the balls of his
Feet, with the cat's impression, indifferent aloofness,
My face drooped; in my eyes no light at all. I cry,
"I want affliction and fire!"

The soiled hamlet from whence I have come, voices rise
To cry for the pain and torture that my soul bore here
Aware that my spirit is not fully independent of the stains of
Mundane effects of wrong-doing, its consequences; neither
Sufficiently evil to be fated for abyss; but keeps on strengthening
Itself in sanctity here

Having no purifications--neither sacrament of baptism, nor
of penance--my venial sins weigh heavy on my soul
I cry for pain, fire, to suffer for the rewards of the divine abode--
A Garden of delights. I ask to be relieved of my
Earthly baggage; for the pain of joy to be completed, to feel
blissful mystery of Him

I find myself in that condition of mind and feelings
When reality gives place to reverie and merges with
The shadowy visions of the first stages of purgatorius ignis
I've carried, on clammy hands, venial sins; to be purged
Of them, being only momentary pain, then soon be on my
Way to Olympus

Here it comes, like a clap of thunder, or like a magic spell
Light one moment and darkness the next--a big fire!
Burning brightly, spreading everywhere. I scream, "burn me!"
I hear those assembled in the hamlet from whence I have
Come, singing, raising their sacrifices up for my sake--
to be purified

In 2015
his novella, *Sabina and the
Mystery of the Ogre*,
won Burt Award
for African Literature.

Dr. Evans Gesura Mecha

KENYA

Evans Gesura Mecha is a poet and a linguist. A member of Kistrech Theatre International, he is also a lecturer of linguistics at the department of languages and Literature, Kisii University. He obtained a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Linguistics from the University of Nairobi in 2013. He has had a short stint as Head of Department and Lecturer in Uganda Kampala University besides a long career as a teacher of English and Literature in English in a number of Secondary Schools in Kenya. He has published numerous academic papers, including "I mean what I say and Say What I Mean: A Case of Double Entendres in Ekegusii" (Opande, N & Mecha G.E. 2015, Journal of Cognitive Science) and "The Prolegomenon to Complete and Partial Homomorphisms in the Syntax-Semantics Interface in Grammars" (Mecha E.G. 2017, ICPLT Conference Proceedings)

Why Neither Poetry nor Philosophy are Subjects of Affection in this Dark Horn of Africa

You have once again come to see what this dark horn of the continent has to offer in the way of poetry and its shadow: philosophy, for that I welcome you all. Where we are, I cannot tell either with the old maps or the new one, since the art of cartography is a tricky one. I scanned the newest of maps, and I cannot tell whether this part of the continent is the dark horn, or south of the Sahara, or the Savannah of carnage or equinox of despair. I scanned the oldest; I could not tell whether it is in ancient Aegyptos or Cush, or troglodyte, famed for breeding the fastest dwarfs, or Ethiopia, the cauldron of lowly deeds, or the Source of the Nile, the fountain of all knowledge. I think it is all of that, a fair mingling of fair and foul.

One can consider anything that we now call science, but the bloom of the incandescent acts of creativity that poetry conceives and philosophy nurtures. Poetry and Philosophy are not subjects that practical minds in this hub for anybody who does the business of taking away ores of little value to us from some warring corners of the dark continent, or if you prefer The Heart of Darkness, both for poetry and philosophy too, which are the subjects for private preoccupation for theoretical minds like mine. Poetry and philosophy, which forever tango, are tragic pair in the ears of the ruling classes, in this jungle of art where the drum broke long before it was. Perhaps, we whose greatest achievement was to build pyramids, if pyramids are graves of pharaohs, revere death. Poetry is greater than science, just as the sun is to the moon, since science only is a fading satellite of the sun, in a continent that has killed its Sun, as Ken Saro Wiwa once put it. This continent will only get it right again when it will rediscover poetry as the ancient builders of Pyramids did (who buried it with Gold when it had got rotten in the hands of mediocrity), and animals and fossils will stop being the centre of tourist attraction.



Since our greatest trophies are skeletons of apes; and our greatest treasure trove the graveyard, then let's study Philosophy. If death is our greatest concern then we should revere Philosophy, as one Hemlock drinkard had it, Philosophy teaches us how to die. What does Poetry teach us? The 'celerity to die' like Cleopatra? The I wish you 'the joy of the worm'.

Africa has had its Prince of poets perhaps, and few in this country can fathom the depths of the divine sea he takes us to. This Christopher Okigbo:

Before you I stand, Mother Idoto
Before your waterly presence...

And this priesthood, the christening, the holy ablution at the waterly presence, better than the glistening of nymph and Nereid on the sea-surf, a little spangled with moonlight, is known to the young of this Nation, which dreads the heaven of Dante, as it dreads the Inferno of Homer, because of the repetitious exam of literature which most would wish to pass by default. Some pass by the aid of wind, sometimes called oxygen, to become deaf chanters of the Muse, well, Milton wrote best when blind, but many with clear-eyes see nothing to write about. It is the eternal puzzle, maybe there is a gadfly for poetry, but it only bites Philosophers, in this corner: of Doom.

How will they attain the synthesis of earth and heaven, the synesthetic

synthesis of earth and heaven, the synesthetic fusion of dust and spirit, the very essence of life, if they have never had a passing glance at the Sun of the Divine Comedy? How can they 'transhumanize' *Per Verba*?

The education offered in institutionalized system in the darkest regions of the heart of darkness has been appropriately named as factory education. This kind of education is purely market oriented. The market is defined partially as serving the trades such as are seen to thrive in the local markets; it ignores the global trends which sometimes disturb this Robison Crusoe policies of sovereignty. In essence, these post-dictive policies are trapped in the past which is no longer there, and are the worst form of regressive thinking. They lack vision and do not even have a rightful presence today. Yet they are trumpeted by the status quo, whose entire thinking is driven by some torn bread-basket.

The factory education is run by a set of dogmas, like creating equality. It assumes everyone can engage in abstract thinking, and everyone can be highly creative if detained in the dungeons of mediocrity built by having poorly written curricula interpreted by copy typist who do not understand what they copy. Then those who fail in the system transit to being teachers of the coming generation, because those who excel are considered anathema. The body politic then engages on an onslaught of glorifying mediocrity and burying any form of elitism. The foolish and ignorant of folks are considered to be wiser than the learned, which is the cancer of the west, and common sense is seen as superior to science. Pseudoscience is preferred to science: and all manner of confidence men run the show. This is the subject of the best of literature in the continent, if one examines Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists*, *The Road and The Strong Breed*.

Though I give Soyinka a laurel, I consider him to have been given the Nobel for so many wrong reasons. He was because his art is the most Grecian and least African, if Grecian is universal. It is Grecian because it builds on a Grecian corruption of construing a pantheon of Gods. Soyinka is a god of so many Grecian gods, Ogun and all other demi gods. If Soyinka's gods are Grecian, they are so because all the Philosophers -- Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras -- are all the children of the esoteric lore taught in Egypt, then diluted by a construal of many meaningless deities, while the Delphian maids still raise an altar to an Unknown God that Soyinka does not see.

A typical African cannot think of more than One God; Moses learnt of the Monotheistic creed and of the cleanliness Circumcision in Egypt. The many gods were the creation of the Grecian general, Soter, who wanted to make a god. Leaders try to force men to deify them to date; it takes the form of being declared 'President for Life' and considering the imagining of the death of a sitting president as treason. Power is so sweet that it makes some men think they will never suffer corruption; so Christ must not die, if he does he only visits hell and must resurrect. Who needs such a dogma other than the mad king to legitimize his reign?

Well, coming closer home, the only poet most people give some accolades around is Okot p'Bitek, from across the border, Uganda (do not forget that where we are was part of Uganda Protectorate, and the Kabaka did reign here once on behalf of Caliban's commonwealth. Well, he is renowned for a few songs: *Horn of my Love*, *Song of Lawino*, *Song of Ocol* and *Song of Malaya*. All of them are footnotes to Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha*, if they are not inspired by him. They were part of set-texts and what anyone with a pretense to sophisticated taste could recommend for a young mind. I read them and heard nothing, though there are many who find those pieces the best that this region has to offer. Only they have fallen into eclipse for a 'dot-com' generation that only reads spark notes, with a mind full of 'tweaking' hip-hop rhymes, well, the fading fashions of the hour. I have heard of no imitation lately worth acknowledging, so let's pass on to examine how the enemies of art

and wisdom have won us over to third-rate charades of realistic drama.

There is a lot to decry in our academies, calling it rot is an understatement. There is a lot of stupid thinking that has gone to water the wine, talk of bad wine in bad sacks and the vultures will come for your carcass; all in the service of power. I need not detail what went wrong when and where, you only have some of the most titular fellows tell you how much they have read out of their discipline and the gutter press, since there is no press. There was a time when finger waving could earn one a professorial position, many are waiting for them to get away, the African way, by natural attrition, and some may see that come to pass.

Most African dictators hold on to some form or other of ancestor worship. Well, they sanctify the past, which is actually sanctifying death of the present. This form of nihilism extends to discrediting any living idea. They have a tomb between their ears which they think is a means to immortality. If you bow to them you are doomed before they eat grass. Hence, they do not like anything called new, tell them of what our fore-fathers did, they have a big ear for that. They do not like questions. I think some who are afraid of Philosophy do so because it is the discipline whose mainstay is asking questions. They are afraid because they are content with the tentative answers that have been given. They believe in established doxastic claims and do not care to seek for answers, because speculation is beyond them. That is the definitive nature of ancestor worship.

Power is so sweet
that it makes some
men think they will
never suffer corruption;
so Christ must not die,
if he does he only
visits hell and
must resurrect.

Now for those who cannot write, because we are ashamed of anything we have not copied (once I wrote some poems, because they were above what the critic had expected from my pen, he asked me, "where did you copy these ones from?"). Well, most of the folks around believe that you can only wildly succeed if you stole something from someone. I cannot then blame the fellows who have stolen from me and them for eons, our greedy neighbours. These neighbours who only know how to ingratiate themselves with willful verse, all the silly things we would like to hear.

You cannot fathom how deep sunk the canon is this end of the world is until you want to choose one poem either for your child in pre-school or anything thereafter. You have to go so many miles out of town. Maybe Seamus

Heaney and Robert Frost could be the closest to the rustic humour that is great, in a country that earns 67% of its Gross Domestic Product from agriculture. If you are not a farmer, you are wasting our time. Every person who knows this has a secret farm somewhere, and a side earning elsewhere.

But all I have said is nothing compared to the tragic forgetfulness I see. The oblivion when the chaos of supplantation occurs. Ask: is there anyone who is going around asking, who is the wisest? Who is the poet? Have you? Why? I might be the only one who is worried about this seeking, this thirst. . . . words fall. . . . I LEFT the class of literature because I was tired of being the odd fool, ever reading dead books, I have been reading living books for a while and they are cheap in their unconsciousness, fleeting as the wind goes, agonizing. So I left because I got tired raising the hand for, who has read Octavio Paz? Who has read Tagore? Who has read Neruda? Machivelli and Obatala?

They should have asked more trendy things like, earrings on the pig's golden nose, tattoos on the hyena or overrun donkey to be slaughtered for increasing the return of a failing butchery. Such matters are more palatable than a poem and a question. Since we are bereft of all manner of invention, we should be glad for this infection of defects, this wretched earthiness that immures our spirit of God-Like Creation.

Did I forget the poesy of thought that is kenneled as Philosophy? No. Here, for a while, we had something called Sage philosophy (Orika, 1991), which assumes that there are some maverick pedestrians who can match Plato and Well, the former is literarily unknown around, and the latter is private property of some yet to be known ancestor worshipping owners of this country that Soyinka celebrates in *The Strong Breed*. Both philosophies do not establish any novel perspective on the metaphysical notions of truth nor beauty.

So far, what we have going under the names of African Philosophy (cf. Wiredu, 2004 and Janz, 2009 to mention a few), and its diasporic extension Africana Philosophy (cf. Gordon, 2008), are reactions to either the accusation of the African as being a noble savage or primitive. The latter seeks to vindicate itself by picking the 'underside' of modernity, to show how enslavement, poor working relations and all of environmental exploitation have poisoned our world. It looks healthy, but is it progressive? The main heuristic of analysis in both is the notion of postcolonialism. It distracts us with making us preoccupied with the past by constructing a form hetero-consciousness that blinds us to our real mission, and the belief that only ancestor worship can redeem us.

What can save our face is to get down to writing beautiful utopias on how we will get into space travel to colonize Mars and teem it with Moors. That is why I would rather spend most of my time watching star trek, than analyze the term ubuntu 'us-ness' or 'we-ness'. I know that those slogans of African Socialism are cheap seductions of thieves who want to use 'tyrannies of numbers' to fill up Swiss accounts. Things that we use to avoid making our roads, sewers, farm our estates and overcome the 'bread and butter issue'. If you replay scenes from a current political campaign, you will see placards of 'FLOUR' while the launch of a second-hand train from China, which will be paid for in the next twenty years on a compound interest, is going on elsewhere.

Since my complaint cannot be given in one session, there is another time. I will take some loose strands and tie them up when another opportunity comes along. I have to stop here and allow the harsh air to settle down, and we hear more positive talk for the so much of this and the so much of that which is the only thing that has some currency now, even in the Academy, in this dark Horn of Africa piercing the sea-change.

What can save
our face is to get
down to writing
beautiful
utopias on how
we will
get into space
travel to
colonize Mars
and teem
it with Moors.

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important facts about ants

An ant leg has three joints.
Ants can lift 20 times more than their weight.
Ants have 250 000 brain cells.
Ants can walk on water.

I am a woman.
My legs have three joints.
I have 100 billion brain cells.
I use them for: playing, learning, problem-solving, not playing, not remembering.

I have strong legs, but I can't walk on water,
can't stand while giving birth, can't run away,
can't stand while bleeding.

I step on the ant because I can't see it.
The ant bites me, evidence
that it shouldn't walk under my foot.

I am a woman.
I have small hands.
I can't walk on water, but I can swim.
I use my legs for: walking, standing, running, hiding, not standing, bleeding.

My legs have three joints.
They mostly point in one direction.
I run, 20 times heavier than blood.
I run from man to man.

-By **Hilde Susan Jaegtnes**

HILDE SUSAN JAEGTNES

NORWAY

Hilde Susan Jaegtnes (born in 1973) is a screenwriter, poet, novelist and performance artist based in Oslo, Norway, with an M.F.A. degree in screenwriting from University of Southern California, Los Angeles. A Norwegian citizen, she was born in Pennsylvania, and has since lived in Norway, Iceland, England, Key West, Switzerland, Honduras and California. Several of her screenplays have been professionally produced and distributed, both short films and feature-length drama films, and her published literary works include the poetry collection "Det er noen som lyver" ("Someone must be lying", published by Solum Bokvennen in Norway, 2012), the flash fiction collection "Minner nytes best alene i storm" ("Memories should be savored alone during storms", published by Solum Bokvennen in Norway, 2014) and the novel "Styggskrift" ("Ugly Writing", published by H/O/F in Norway, 2016), as well as numerous poems, flash fiction pieces, short stories, essays and film reviews in Norwegian and international newspapers and literary publications.

Hilde Susan Jaegtnes' poetic universe has been described as "a roller-coaster designed by Salvador Dalí" with its surrealist, sexual, playful, disturbing and dreamlike features. Themes frequently explored in her work include gender roles, power imbalance and abuse, existentialist despair, destructive romantic traps, and the transformative powers of the subconscious, imagination and language. An anonymous blogger reported that reading her poetry felt "like going to bed with a wild sea otter". Through her writing, which she sees as a continuation of modernism in the tradition of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Knut Hamsun, Jaegtnes is intent to prove that fantasies are key to understanding the course of history, and that psychological realism remains an incomplete tool to unlocking the human spirit.

Lily Michaelides

CYPRUS

Lily Michaelides was born in Nicosia, Cyprus, where she lives and works. She attended a course on Secretarial Studies and Public Relations.

She has published three collections of poetry by Govostis Publications in Athens. *The Alchemy of Time* (2001), *Shapes and Roads in Relief...* (2003) and *Remembrance of a Dawn* (2004) in Greek and English – a bilingual edition, and by Melani Publications (Athens) the: *Intimations (Ypenigmoi)* (2007), a poetry collection, *The City Needs No Introductions* (2010), prose and *Arena*, a bilingual poetry collection (2014) (short listed for the state poetry award).

Her poems have been published in newspapers and literary magazines in Cyprus and abroad and have been translated into English, French, Italian, Serbian, Swedish, Bulgarian, Romanian and Turkish.

In June 2013 she joined the Board of Directors of the Cyprus PEN Centre responsible for Public and International Relations.

Since 2006 she is co-owner & director of Ideogramma, organisers of International Literary and Poetry Festivals and cultural events in Cyprus and in Europe.

In June 2013
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International
Relations.

The Cause

It was the sand hills.
The house that stood alone.
The sea that slid on a shore exclusively its own
and the tamarisks that grew unrestricted.
It was the moon that waxed day by day
till it became red like a ball of ice-cream
that invited me to taste it
and the wind that blew sand on the faces
sand light and damp that glistened and stuck to the skin.

And you, who weren't here, yet you filled the room
with a love unrestricted like the tamarisks.
You weren't here.
Yet you were the cause.

- By Lily Michaelides



Photo by Judith Kinitz

Nora Gomringer & Philipp Scholz

GERMANY

Nora Gomringer & Philipp Scholz proudly present:

"Bang! Bang! Bang!" – Fatalyrical Moments

Philipp Scholz and Nora Gomringer have teamed up to fuse into a duo. "Bang! Bang! Bang!" is paying tribute to the love affair of poetry & jazz. With Scholz' vigorous, dynamic and ever agile way of playing the drums – word, sound, jazz at its best are reverberating – an interaction is created, that does not weaken the language but enriches the music with another color. The "color Gomringer" is: good humour, extensive and deep message and fun. Fatalyrical moments guaranteed. Stay close and listen closely, when they – yes, one could say – conjure, provide magic with a variety of German and English poems.

Nora Gomringer was born in 1980. Her background is page-related poetry and Spoken Word, her present is the vast variety of poetry and recitation. For her work, she received numerous bursaries and awards. Lately the duo received the renowned Villa Kowagama Residency bursary in Kyoto for the fall 2016.

Philipp Scholz was born in 1990. He is a jazz drummer based in Leipzig, where he's a master scholar at the Jazz department. He plays the drums in numerous bands and expands his "instrumental vocabulary" constantly. In 2015, his band Plot published their album "Tightrope."

Check out "Gomringer + Scholz" on Facebook; OR find us here:
www.nora-gomringer.de
www.philipp-scholz.info

Wie soll ich das beschreiben?

Ich könnte sagen: Ein Wort, das ist ein Igel.
 Ein Igel in der Hecke, der eine Rolle macht,
 die Stacheln außen zeigt, den weichen Bauch
 versteckt.

Ich könnte sagen: Ein Wort, das ist ein kleines Boot.
 Ein Boot im See, das treibt im Wind,
 sein Segel blähen lässt, den ganzen Sommer lang
 im Abenteuer schwebt.

Ich könnte sagen: Ein Wort, das bist auch du.
 Du bist ein Wort, der Klang dahinter,
 bist Überraschung und Verwirrung für die,
 die deinen Namen sprechen.
 Du Kind, du Mädchen, Junge, kleine Welt,
 du Universum miniature.

- By Nora Gomringer

Aus: Nora Gomringer: achduje. Verlag Der gesunde Menschenversand, Luzern 2015. S. 99.



Robert Onteri Nyabuto

KENYA

Robert Onteri, aka Hector De Poet, is a teacher. He obtained a Bachelor of Education degree in English and Literature from Kisii University. He is currently an MA student of literature at The University of Nairobi. His poetic journey can be traced back to his days in high school where he was a member of Journalism and Kiswahili clubs. These two clubs gave him the platform on which he discovered his footing in poetry writing. Additionally, the years he spent at the University also fortified his talent in poetry. He has been a member of Kenyan Poets Lounge, Poetritis Aurora and Wordsmiths Poetry Crew. He owes gratitude to Samson Rapando of Budding Poets, Dr. Christopher Okemwa of Kisii University and Eric Valles of Singapore for their great support in his poetry writing. He has also shared a podium with several international poets, including Prof Seth Michelson (USA), Godspower Oboido (Nigeria), Gunnar Waerness (Norway), Daniel H. Dugas (Canada) and Tony Mochama (Kenya).

Speak, My Pen Speak

Gunshots, unrest and wailing souls
Bitter and scattered cries from innocent citizens
Helpless and speechless dead bodies all lay
Two men, different tribes, fighting for power
I am abashed from my dreams, family and ambitions
I speak death: SPEAK IT, MY PEN SPEAK
I live in the desert -- this is where I got my dessert
No dad, no food, no mate
In this place, I lost a mother, I lost love
Snakes and thorn trees are my neighbours
But am I not a citizen of Mangala country?
I Speak of Solitude and suffering
SPEAK, MY PEN SPEAK
My leg will be amputated today
But I will be in this hospital to stay
The bill is too high, my ability too low
"Cancer patients will receive free medication."
But it ain't so, it was a lie
I am speaking of poverty and treachery
SPEAK, MY PEN SPEAK
In writing, I was speaking
I have become a son of chains, canes and slaps
Every day in handcuffs, that I do condemn governments

He has been a
member of
Kenyan Poets Lounge,
Poetritis Aurora and
Wordsmiths Poetry Crew.

Every day in handcuffs, that I do condemn governments
When will authors, playwrights and poets live freely?
I am ready to sleep, never to wake
For poetic licence
I SPEAK OF OPPRESSION, for the caged birds
SPEAK, MY PEN SPEAK

- by Robert Onteri
(Facebook: Roberto De Khalifa)



SHEILAH KEMUNTO BENSON

KENYA

Sheilah Kemunto graduated from Kisii University, Kenya, with a Bachelor of Education degree in English and Literature. She is a poet and had participated at the 2015 edition of Kistrech Poetry Festival. She is currently a teacher of English and Literature at Nyakongo Boys' High School, Kisii, Kenya.

“MY CITY...
EVEN WHEN SORROW
STEALS THE
ATMOSPHERE...
EVERYTHING IS
DESIRABLE”



My City...

In a city where castles are built
Where beauty is readily ransomed
And honesty abides in and outside...
Is the city of my every-day dream,
Where love is not a vocabulary
But a day-in day-out action.
Where smile plaster all around
Even when sorrow steals the atmosphere,
Where everything is desirable
But homesteads and family stands
Where I dream of walking all the time
Even by the muddy but bright alleys
Where everybody matter somehow
And charity begins at home applies
For the people make the city lovable
And admiration sweeps the existence
To just see my dream come true.



Sunrise and Sunset

And the wonder of it all
Is the wonder of sunrise
The wonder of created time
And the beauty of sunrise
The beauty of created light
But the wonder starts again
It's the wonder of sunset
The wonder when light hath gone
And total nothing engulfs the world
And the beauty of sunset and sunrise
All set to end and begin at appointed time
The beauty of this moment to skylines
And the horizons, still show it all
Shows the wonder of sunrise and sunset
The beauty of sunrise and sunset
And the wonder of it all...
Is the beauty of sunrise and sunset.

ROSEMARIE WILSON

USA

Rosemarie Wilson, a.k.a. One Single Rose, is an award winning poet, spoken word artist, singer, actress, playwright, author of three self-published poetry collections, nice and naughty chapbooks. Rosemarie is a Davenport University graduate, nine times National Poetry Award (NPA) nominee, 2010 recipient of the NPA's New & Upcoming Poet, Poetry Author of the Year award and her CD, Poetic Truth, was voted 2015 Spoken Word/Poetry Album of the Year. She is a four time "Who's Who in Black Detroit honoree," first place and three time honorable mention recipient of the Detroit Writers' Guild Paul Laurence Dunbar Poetry Contest, 2012 SAFE (Sisters Acquiring Financial Empowerment) Ambassador Award recipient, SVMixMedia.com's 2012 Performance Artist of the Year, Detroit Metro Times' reader's choice 2014/2015 Best Local Poet and she was nominated in the 2014 Spoken Word Billboard Awards. Upon entering a slam competition for the first time at the Motown Museum in Detroit, Rosemarie was named Motown Mic 2014 Performance Artist of the Year. In 2011, Rosemarie debuted as an actor in Detroit. She has since performed both nationally and internationally in a few amazing productions. A few of her notable performances include, the Floacist's Flovertex in Detroit, MI, the Kistrech Poetry Festival in Kisumu, Kenya, the Piton International Film Festival in St. Lucia, as well as touring Europe in 2012. She is currently a featured artist and songwriter with Defected Records, the United Kingdom's #1 house music record label. Her poetry is published with Broadside-Lotus Press, Inner Child Press, Night Ballet Press and Crisis Chronicles Press. For four years Rosemarie hosted the Spotlight open mic poetry series in Detroit every 1st and 3rd Friday at Manila Bay Café, which was named 2014 Open Mic of the Year by the NPAs and Detroit Metro Times' reader's choice 2015 Best Open Mic. 2014 marks the official launch of her non-profit motivational workshop series One Single Rose's Bloom, workshops centered on inspiring bright youngSTARS and seasoned adults to fearlessly follow their passions. 2014 was a year of "firsts" for Rosemarie—she released two spoken word CDs, (Poetic Truth available on iTunes and Straight Up, No Chaser) and her first full-length comedic stage play entitled ADDICTION sold out in its debut at the Boll Family Theater, on Broadway in Detroit.

For more information on One Single Rose, please visit:
www.onesinglerose.com



One Single Rose

She is a four time
"Who's Who in Black Detroit honoree,
" first place and three time honorable
mention recipient of the Detroit Writers'
Guild Paul Laurence Dunbar Poetry Contest,
2012 SAFE (Sisters Acquiring Financial
Empowerment)
Ambassador Award recipient,
SVMixMedia.com's
2012 Performance Artist of the Year,
Detroit Metro Times' reader's choice
2014/2015 Best Local Poet and she was
nominated in the 2014 Spoken
Word Billboard Awards.



Zachary Kluckman

USA

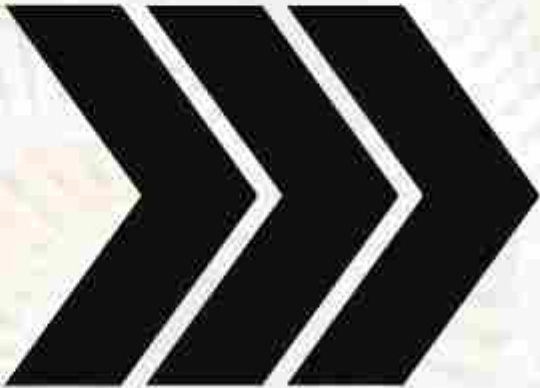
Zachary Kluckman is a multi-award winning author, poet and spoken word artist. He has been recognized consistently by the National Poetry Awards, twice earning distinction as the Slam Organizer of the Year (2015 and 2016), and Slam Artist of the Year (2014). Recognized as a Gold Medal Poetry Teacher by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for his work with young writers, Kluckman is an activist, youth advocate and community organizer who has made multiple appearances at the National and Individual World Poetry Slams. Kluckman tours extensively, performing and facilitating poetry and performance workshops nationwide. He has spoken at higher education conferences and seminars about the use of spoken word for retention and success in the classroom and served as Poet-In-Residence at several schools. Kluckman is the creator and Director of the Albuquerque Slam Poet Laureate Program, and served as Festival Coordinator for the Verse-Converse Poetry Festival from 2009 to 2010. He is a founding organizer of the 100 Thousand Poets for Change program, now recognized as the largest poetry reading in history. A Pushcart Prize nominee, Kluckman has authored several freelance articles and book reviews for local and national publications and served as an Editor for numerous journals, including: Sotto Voce, Cartier

Review, and The Journal of Truth and Consequence. Currently, he serves as the Spoken Word Editor for the Pedestal magazine. He is the author of three collections of poetry, including Per-City Poems, the Red Mountain Press National Poetry Prize winning Animals in Our Flesh and Some of It is Muscle, a finalist in the New Mexico / Arizona Book Awards. He has also edited two anthologies of poetry and memoir, including the New Mexico Book Awards finalist, Earthships: A New Mecca Poetry Anthology and Trigger Warning: Poetry Saved My Life.

Word Problems

One man, who is an artist, has two dreams and four children. The first dream of the artist is the multiplication of their dreams by an exponential factor of infinity. If each of these children are a brush and the artist has only one canvas, how much paint will he need to pigment a sky big enough for them to believe in? The second dream of the artist is to find a love to replace the one lost in the first part of the equation. His oldest child, the only girl, has three brothers from him. By account of the blood, he is not her father, but he has spent 6,200 days teaching her the words she uses to describe her dreams, which number more than two. Each of her brothers has two dreams of their own, which are a function of living under the normal curve. The mother, who had children with two men, has disappeared into the complicated math of her addiction, the way her skin reacts to liquids. Alcoholism alters the algorithm of her ability to bond with them. The man has been divided by the loss of his wife, leaving him an irrational number. The square root of two. His heart is a train leaving two stations at ninety-five miles an hour. Calculate the force of friction it will take to slow his collision. How fast must he accelerate in another direction to avoid the collision altogether?

STUDENTS **AND** UPCOMING POETS





AKECH OBAT MASIRA

KENYA

Akech Obat Masira is a well-known Kenya theatre personality. He has been at the centre of artistic expression within Lake Victoria region since 1980. He has directed many plays and has been a visiting artistic director to various theatre companies in Britain, namely: Arts Opportunity Theatre (Bristol), Staunch Poets & Players (London), Camden United Theatre (London) and Dr. Forster Theatre in Stroud (Gloucestershire). His theatrical productions have been straight in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan and Britain.

In poetry, he is referred to as 'a poet of destiny,' meaning that his poetry mainly focuses on those who have passed on but had made tangible contributions to the society when they were alive. His poems include "A Tribute Poem in Memory of a Great Educationist, The Late Principal Obare Awuora", "The Noble Man of Nyakach, Mzee Henry Awuor Imbo," and "Tribute Poem for Tom Mboya". However, he has also written a poem about Barack Obama.

OBAMA: THE GLOBAL STAR

Obama: the global star, our star
We in Africa welcome Obama ...
And his vision of largesse
To make our lives wholesome
Improving the regular income
his vision inspires

The bedraggled poor
Whole daily hope
Is to aspire for better
that our ambitions
must not rise and fall
and veer off course
like birds in a storm

Obama: the global star;
our star
the star of Africa
the American star
and the total global star
Obama: the global star
our star

Obama: The global
star our star
Mama Sarah Obama
is happy
and kogello excited as never before

Barrack Obama, the American president
her grandson
President Obama, a great world leader
the global star
our star

is visiting his roots ... Kenya
the home of Kogelo village
Obama: the global star our star
Obama: the global star
our star
Obama biro,
Yawne -yo!
Kenyans are excited, excited
Kogelo more than excited

Obama the American president
is our blood kin
Welcome with deserving love
for Barack Obama loves Africa
loves Kenya
outside ethnic prejudice
as he loves humanity
and the unity of mankind

Obama: the global star
our star
President Obama is our balance
beyond the horizon
who

with good reasons
seasons our Africa's democracy
"Jakogelo"
A blood connection
Pulls us together
Obama Barrack is our allure
Pure as fresh air
Sure as the rising sun
And the potent cure of
The Kenyans ethnic bigotry
Simple as history
Obama: the global star
Our star

President Obama loves Kenya
But a just Kenya
Free of corruption and impunity
Without ethnic bigotry
Obama crafts for Africa
A creative paradigm
Embracing self-perception
Facing off with deception
Its vision of Africa is that of positivity of
confident nations
And determined unities
He knows our vast potential
Our strengths and weakness
And fundamental needs
Obama knows our priorities
Like with needy –and not the seedy
And the greedy
Leprosy of unreality
Disfigures most humans
Busy with our politics
That we must be winners
And losers and political sinners
Must not be choosers
Obama: the global star
Our star

By **AKECH OBAT MASIRA &
OMAR NASSER**



CONSTANY OTEKI MOSE

STUDENT, KISII UNIVERSITY

The Silent Communion

Home:
I see them.
Young and aged,
Thinning out
Angular and clumsy.
Their ribs ache from too much yawning,
Faintly-glowing deep sunken eyes,
Seeming to have harkened the grave's voice.
In long queues they stand,
Despite the earth's scorching suns.
Mothers with baskets, fathers with hats
The cries of hungry children a melody in the air.
Sometimes the exchange of blows is really
As each wrestles for a share of relief food.
Today they get a portion of the relief donations;
Tomorrow the chiefs disappear with it into unknown space.

Bitter venomous roots gathered,
Cattle carcass collected;
Dipped in fires to roast.
Children surrounds merrily,
Exhausted from long walks-- searching for a drop of water.
Faint joyous chants glows their hearts
Others just stare with simple smiles
Hopes of seeing a brighter tomorrow.

Elly Omullo

Student, Kisii University



Will Do It Tomorrow

Will do it tomorrow,
for now a little slumber,
trivial slumber, won't close m' eyes,
For my body is already toxic,
with the venom of heavy eyes,
-really fatigued.

Will do it 'morrow, that I swear,
for here comes in my slumber,
dreams of fancy anti- manual v8,
and the charming Mrs. Right,
whose cough threatens to beat,
the global book of record.

Will do it tomorrow,
also know am in campus,
Just let me update my nerves,
with the banging bhang that backs,
in my mind like the punky dogs or the
untamed slum matatus that hoots,
louder than guilt explosion.

Will do it tomorrow,
let me first take a selfie,
to let the public know
that the mishap was fatal,
and the 14 seater left heads scattered,
with none-demanding ownership.

Will do tomorrow,
let me first update my face'bk page, my status,
with the news of the innocent corpse
of baby pendo, the love angel,
her stray bulletted news,
the virgin poor queen whose body,
serves as a golden crossover ,
for the new regime.

- By Elly Omullo

Kennedy Kamande Murigi

Student at
Gaichanjiru Mixed Secondary School,
Kagundu-in, Thika

My Selection....

Your first touch was so conspicuous,
It made me very suspicious,
For you made me unconscious,
It turned me to be envious...

Our love bond is so strong,
Like Eurobond it is sung like a song,
Among many I chose you,
To live with you all along.....

With you I will not wander,
Like a Christian without a prayer,
Now I will not commit murder,
For you are my love slayer....

Meeting you was a relief,
It was beyond my belief,
Was about to fall off a cliff-
But came and held me in your hand,
Your love made my heart bright,
Both, you and I, can take a flight,
Am ready to engage in a fight,
To make you my miss right....

- by **Marther Oyuga Okomo**
(E-mail. Marthaoga96@gmail.com)



*Our love bond is so strong,
Like Eurobond it is sung like a song,*

Marther Oyuga Okomo

Student, Kisii University

Tender Touch

So gone are the days,
So hot are the nights,
So chilly are the mornings,
How sad am I longing!!
For your tender touch.

Days moves faster like wind,
Dawns moves as slow as chameleons,
Nights crawl as snakes,
And my thoughts still in your pillow,
How I miss and long...
For your tender touch.

He broke my childhood memories,
He brought my thoughts to real world,
He bought a nice rose flower,
And placed them on my bed,
I can't forget this.....
The tender touch still sounds real.



*He brought my thoughts to real world,
He bought a nice rose flower,*

Richard Maisiba Mokua

KENYA

Broken Heart

In this numbing cold I stand comforted by this corner,
Hell must be grinning swearing they better than this loner,
You see, I've been down this lane before fighting the shackles of
being a stoner,
Broken lies, broken ties, wasted nights chasing the borer.

Honestly, it's not each day you wake up to a vanished family,
Like air missing what an irony,
All that's left is unending agony,
My mind and heart no longer sync in harmony,
Wait... did I say heart, because that too died when I lost their
company,
The revolution formed from the pangs of loneliness.

Each moment I kept questioning,
Why you went without informing,
You left me behind weeping,
As I thought you were only nap taking,
My eyes see blur in everything,
As I take a look at your panegyric each evening,
When are you people coming?
You said you were never leaving,
Leaving and not returning.



Like air missing what an irony,
All that's left is unending agony,
My mind and heart no longer sync in harmony,
Wait... did I say heart, because that too died
when I lost their company,

RICHARD OSORO ONKENDI

POET, KISII UNIVERSITY

CATAclysmic SIEGE

Why should we?
Mere humans
Filled with bitterness
Torn with claws,
Left helpless and desolate.

Yet He allows,
His sharp arrows deep into our hearts,
Everyday every night every other day,
A cup of deep sorrow we drink
Our loved ones,
Our beloved,
Driven away.

Every village,
Splendour is gone,
Grief over the loss,
Light has become darkness
Yet He hasn't revealed,
To anyone,
The deep hidden secret.

Where do they go?
Only sorrow is the norm,
The venom,
All hope is lost,
Yet He wherever and when,
Does He enjoy the helplessness.



*Yet He allows,
His sharp arrows deep into our hearts,
Everyday every night every other day,
A cup of deep sorrow we drink
Our loved ones, Our beloved, Driven away.*

THE SHORES OF RIVER NJORO

Alone in desolation,
By the shores of River Njoro,
When I accompanied my mother,
Young and innocent,
Playing while she washed.

By the shores of River Njoro,
Memories linger,
Of how we shared and played Karongo,
Hide and seek we enjoyed,
Grew together and perfected to perfection,
Touched and ate forbidden fruits,
Now I no longer accompany my mother.

This same store,
Where I sat to enjoy the beautiful,
Rays of the sun I watched the girls play,
I saw her and my heart beat,
Like a drum set in mulongo dance.
I stuttered yet,
I poured my heart out to her.

Now she is nowhere,
Long gone and left in the dark,
Yet I can't reach her,
She is gone, gone forever.

GLOSSARY

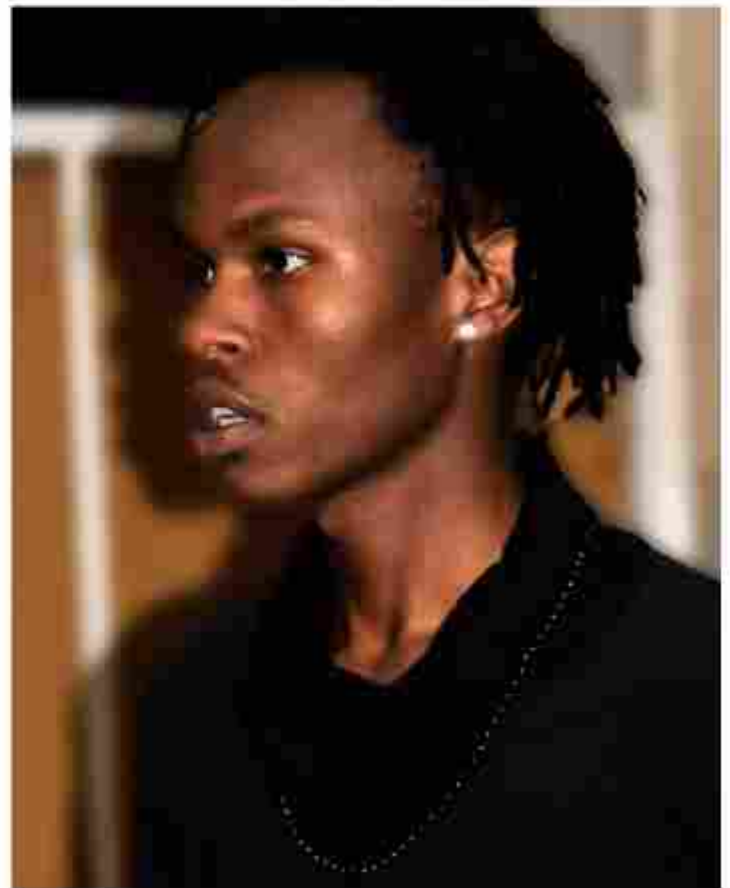
Karongo – Children's game

Mulongo dance – Traditional Luhya dance

Sting The Poet

KENYA

Gichimu Ikua (Poetic Sting) is a young, committed and dedicated both writing and performing poet. Besides pursuing a science course in Kisii University Kenya, the maps of his heart lead into the beauty and love of art.





KPF 2014- A Visit to
Tabaka Soapstone Mine



KPF 2015- A Visit to
Kenyatta University



KISTRECH POETRY FESTIVAL 2016





KISTRECH POETRY FESTIVAL 2016



From Left
Okemwa (KPF Director),
Damiana (Wife) **Prof. Michelson** (USA)



KPF 2016-
Reading poetry at the
shores of **Lake Victoria**



KPF 2016
Participating Poets



KPF 2016-Kenyan Poet,
Tony Mochama reading
his poetry at Lake Victoria



KPF 2016-
A Visit to **Genesis**
Preparatory School



Jennifer Karmin (USA)
A Visit to the Kisii University
Literature Class





KISTRECH INTERNATIONAL



POETRY FESTIVAL

2017

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COME, PARTICIPATE, INTERACT, SHARE AND LEARN.

OUR GUEST POETS



AMIR OR
(ISRAEL)



ANSELM BERRIGAN
(USA)



HILDE SUSAN
JAEGTRES
(NORWAY)



KUNTA MOLOISE
(BOTSWANA)



LILY MICHAELIDES
(CYPRUS)



MARWAN MAKHOUL
(PALESTINE)



PHILIPP SCHOLZ &
NORA COMRINGER
(GERMANY)



ROBERT ONTERI
(KENYA)



SHEILAH KEMUNTO
(KENYA)



ONE SINGLE ROSE
(USA)



ELLY OMULLO
(KENYA)



ZACHARY KLUCKMAN
(USA)



CHRISTOPHER OKEMWA
(KENYA)



HEMANT DIVATE
(INDIA)

DATES AND VENUES

MAIN VENUE - KISII UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY 5TH OCT. 2017
MISANGO INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL, KISUMU
FRIDAY 6TH OCTOBER 2017, AT 7:00PM - 9:00PM
UFANISI RESORT, KISII

SATURDAY 7TH OCT. 2017
MAASAI MARA GAME RESERVE

SUNDAY 8TH OCT. 2017
MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR OF ISRAEL EMBASSY - NAIROBI
MONDAY 9TH OCT. 2017 AT 9:00AM - 11:00AM
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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