EBOQUILLS ANTHOLOGY 2023

IN THE MEMORY OF



WHO BUILT THEIR DREAMS FAR FROM HOME



EDITED BY EHI-KOWOICHO OGWIJI COVER ART BY OGIRIMA DANIEL

[In the memory of] Girls Who Built Their Dreams Far From Home

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Editor's Note

I had many selah (pause and reflect) moments while reading through the poems in this anthology. The quality of thoughts and the depth of language expressed in this body of work made the project even more worthwhile.

Isn't it just amazing to pass blank canvases to a group of artists from different parts of the world and watch them return with unique pieces of artwork, each sizzling with the same message?

All of us at Eboquills are proud to usher you into an exhibition of their paintings. We hope the splatter of ink and each brush stroke come together to form the momentum you need to advocate for change in any capacity.

Eboquills' goal for this project was to amplify our girls' voices as they have been backup singers in our society's choral for too long. I am sure we switched things up a bit, we just can't put an exact decibel to it now.

The title—In the Memory of Girls Who Built Their Dreams Far From Home — is a paraphrased excerpt from the second poem in this book. The somber tone of the anthology calls for reflection but as the poet puts it; this is no tale of misfortune but rather a blessed memory of every girl who built their dreams far from home.

To all the poets who shared their work, and lend their voices to the girlchild movement, we are one stride forward because of you. Thank you!

Ehi-kowoicho Ogwiji,

Editor,

October 2023.

An insider guide on how to knit joy By Wisdom Nemi Otikor

١.

Sister, begin from the little places within your soul.

Carry each fragment like holy memories waiting for the Messiah. Not in amens and hallelujahs.

Not in the way your mother did that turned her into a chanting of smoke at the bellowing of your father.

Not in the voiceless way your mother's mother did finding home in the rocks of grandpa's decrees.

11.

Find your voice. And speak. When you do, they'll ask, 'Who gave you that?' You - from the ancestry of shrinking women. Do not become a shameplant. Bloom. Wear woman like flowers in summer. Tell them of your mothers, brave enough to cower, to make room for their men. Tell them you are a new language, the progenitor of your religion. And if they doubt, show them.

III.

Believe in your magic. You are a testament of possibilities. And if you doubt, do it all over again.

Wisdom Nemi Otikor writes from Lagos, Nigeria, where he teaches creative writing in one of the city's top Elementary schools. With a Bachelor of Arts degree in English studies from the University of Port Harcourt, he believes that writing is therapeutic and sees poetry as a course to healing.

He is a poet whose works have appeared in Ake Review, Libretto, Dwarts, Praxis, Parousia, and other acclaimed literary magazines. His writing deals with relatable human longings and questions and makes extensive allusions to Christian symbols.

He can be contacted on Instagram and Twitter on @Wisdomotikor.



Grief is a girl shading feminity into her father's prayers By Bella Ogwuche

This night,

I see a girl's body fading its way into exile; calling the name of the one who returns her prayers with silence.

Some distance away the devil is still a character who refuses to look my way with a fatherly smile.

He does so because tradition says that bitterness could grant god another body/

Could shape-shift his child's soul

into anything but a vessel housing feminity. At home, my mother speaks only silence. This policy is a religion that buries our tongue beneath

our husband's thumb. Here, a girl's sweat transforms into an ocean hoping to swim her way to freedom but a stray bullet swallows her new frontier

(another dream crashes on a rock).

But this is no tale of misfortune but rather a blessed memory of every girl who built their dreams far from home.



Bella Ogwuche is a fourteen-year-old bard, author, and spoken word poet. She is a hilltop member and a student of Jewel Model School. She is the winner of the teen author prize (poetry). She was the second runner-up for the Uzo_ Ugbodima Poetry Prize 2022. She is the winner of the WIPO slam and duet slam. She was the first runner-up for the ALitFest slam. Her works have appeared or are forthcoming in Salamander Ink mag, artlounge magazine, Aster Lit mag, Spill Word, Teen Lit magazine, and others.



Voices quaking from a distant cry

By Chinemerem Prince Nwankwo

"Child marriage denies the girl child her right to a healthy, educated, and empowered life. It perpetuates gender inequality and undermines progress for all." - Malala Yousafzai

& here again on this soil

in unspoken rage, we taste the remnant blights

of our mothers — scars invoking the loins of a child.

for father says a girl is a balcony of many children whose name is another.

yet a deep travel into mama's eyes tells a different story.

prayers, prayers, her motherhood drips.

faint hopes squash, menaces spill:

little-breasted ones meet in solemnization,

as aged grips again rewrite blooming destinies.

O! reminisces appeals as effulgent dreams, once a girl dreamt;

her echoes reassuring and anchoring a safe haven.

now the blueprint is a grey hair reclining at her bosom.

forbid this dying self our wrenching hearts seem to say maybe this frail heart is aching for a revolution.

Isn't a voice quivering from an innate cry?

quivering not as in the manners of our wailing mothers

or irrigating the floors of hallowed altars with sweats of sprinkled precautions.

but on this side, today will offshoot to liberty.

Chinemerem Prince Nwankwo is currently an undergraduate of history and international studies, University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria. While in school, he serves as Ethics and Membership Chair of the Rotaract Club of the University. He loves to read and write about Africa, women, and children. If not found buried in books, he takes pleasure in prayer walks, meditating, and seeing movies. Say hello to him on Facebook @ CP Nwankwo.



Equality is not an IllusionBy Sarah Adeyemo

The joy of my coming was burdened with contempt.

father with tight fist; and colored feeling

Looked upon me like a banned book; like an object of insubordination;

As if I assumed the wrong body.

In my country,
from the cradle, a girl child is for the backstage;
So it is nonsense to think she can be anything but a body,
or an object for many stories.

Here, a girl has the liberty to imagine, to assume what she knows she must not become. She may have a voice, but not thoughts of her own.

In my land, femininity is merely a word,
Our gender is a currency for men; for status.
When our chest sprouts like a seedlings,
A transaction is in progress.

I tell you, in my land my hope to defeat tradition is not an illusion,

To rise, for my voice to eradicate conventions,

To treat inequality as a disease;

As I rise to proclaim justice.



Sarah Adeyemo is a Nigerian creative writer and spoken word artist. She is an undergraduate in English and Literary studies. She emerged as the Runner-up in the NASELS writing competition at Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, and a Runner-up in the 2023 PROFWIC Poetry Contest. She is also a Book Review Moderator at Prolific Fiction Writers Community. Her works have appeared in Eboquills, Northern Writers Forum Journal, anthologies, and elsewhere.



A Poem Where a Girl Is Something Other Than a Caryatid By Victor Obukata

A girl unhangs her smile from the broken wall of her father's house and wears it like a tallis mannot the way her mother wears hers over her sorrow. she unearths herself from the blanket of fear worn on her by the years her mother's skin suffered the language of her father's fist, and the evening her

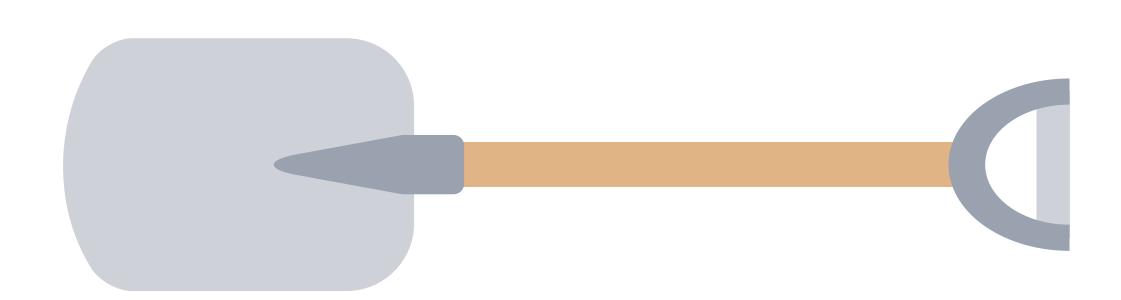
sister came home a broken jar. She molds herself out of their weeping voices and peeps into the darkness all she can hear is the soft voices of nocturnals, and fireflies illuminating. She turns towards the moon and says "God, may our skin not know any longer, the taste of sorrow."

Victor Obukata is a fifteen-year-old teen Nigerian writer. His works appear and are forthcoming in synchronized chaos and spill words. He is a member of HCAF and a member of the Northern Writers Forum.



Calling A Spade By Olayioye Patricia Bukola

I envy the lost glories that Harmattan gleans. My desire for their return supersedes its hunger. You look in the mirror & see that age is whittling your body. You see that, what you fear losing, is taking flight from you. & what you fear touching is hooking you to itself - like the love of thread & needle. Sometimes, I wish there was no growing up, but living, transfixed to the time everything drips honey around you. Once ago, in my puerility, I dreamed of life as roses, sleeping & waking to the same routine. I don't think of motherhood. Maybe because the mirror shields this from me. But now, I'm sparking towards motherhood, embittered with sulfuric drudging. I am fluxing towards the pond, once filled with my mother. I will say, the rocks on this waterbed are live coals. How much they burn my attempt to make life easy, to make life simple. For example, to find true love. I swear, the hunter's perseverance is less than mine. I trawl for love in the mouth of a hyena. I crawl into the arms of a man, succulent as water but little I know this water will boil me. That this nightshade from the sultry sun will birth snakes. I love this man, but he manned me like a mining factory. I don't know how to pluck love from my mother's story & stitch it to mine.



Olayioye Patricia Bukola is a writer, dramatist, singer, and songwriter, and a recent graduate of Bet High School, Pankshin, Plateau State. She dreams of pursuing a course in Arts at any of the prestigious universities in Nigeria, though her mind is on LASU. Aside from writing, she loves sitting down beside her brother to sing, while he plays the keyboard. She is passionate about women's affairs and could sometimes take the form of a feminist. Her mother dedicates a particular time when she teaches her about women.

ROLLERCOASTER

By Ferdinand, Emmanuel Somtochukwu

silence is the pseudonym mapped on the face of girls. In this poem, they are portraits on the moon. with parables in their tongue sliced out like leaflets in a shredder. in their bodies dwells a god in chromatic color burning with a cloud of sadness. yesterday, my neighbor said that. they are second-class citizens & my aunt replied that they are clusters of stars hidden in the night. how can the birdsong that soothes the body be hidden & the light that shines be plunged into oblivion? they become the temple on the streets waving to boys for salvation. what makes the puzzle hard to solve on their skin?



Ferdinand, Emmanuel Somtochukwu is a young Nigerian poet and essayist. He has written a number of poems that have brought him to literary scenes and contests such as the Elysian African Poetry Contest which he came out as the fourth runner-up. He is a scholar of language who has a keen interest in arts, humanities, and literature and is also a journalist for LASU Conscience, a media outlet at Lagos State University (LASU). His poems and articles appear in Wingless Dreamer, Eboquills Magazine, and The Nigerian Voice. He is currently studying English Language at Lagos State University.

SHEvolution

By John Phebe Ifeoluwa

I fear that I'm slowly drifting away
From the shores of my identity
I fear that I will always be blown
Aback to the front lines
Of the world's primal idealism
I fear that I'm expected to be
A patriotic symbol of a system

Buried beneath inequality

I fear that I've been robbed of a chance

To divulge my dreams and passions.

I fear that I'm left bare

Assailed, Like a light

Hiding

Under the bushel

Of uncertainties

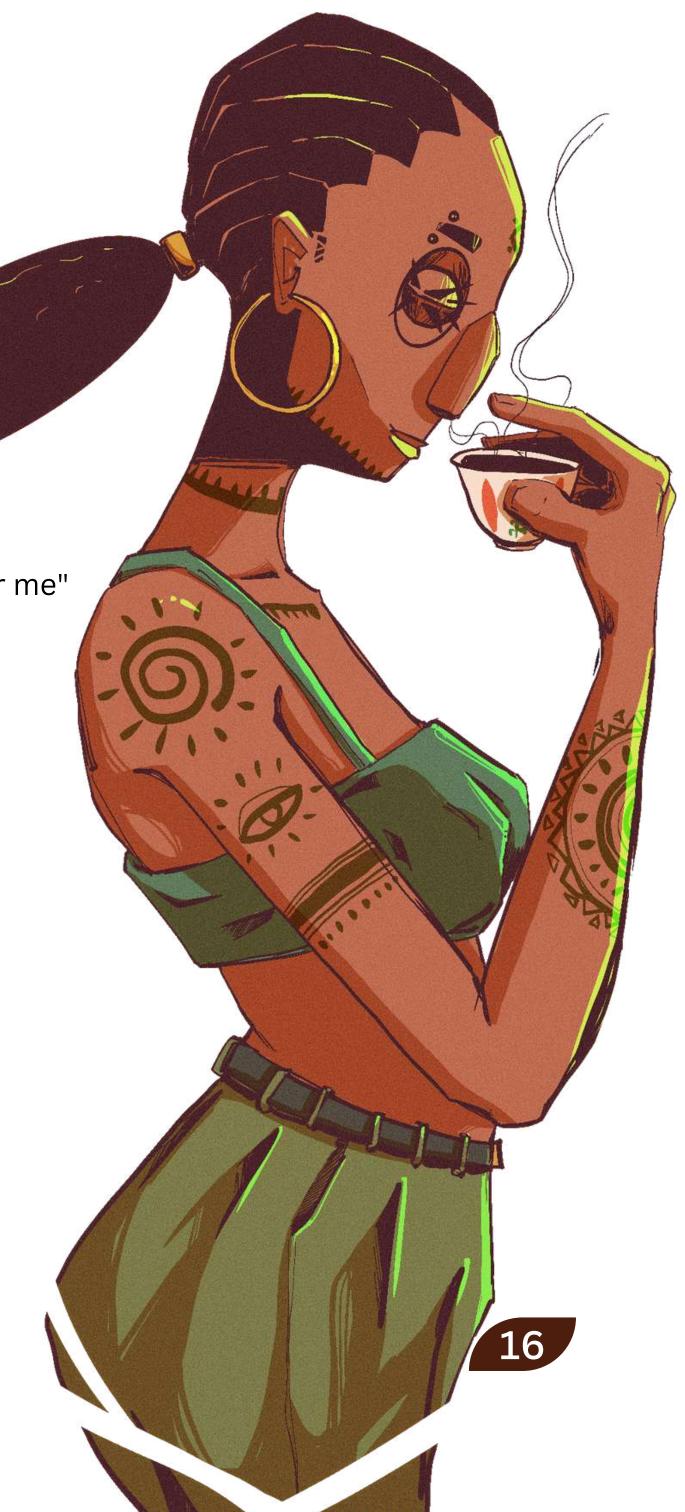
I fear that I'll walk alone

On the path they say "It's not meant for me"

I fear that I've lost my compliance

To the preset metrics of society

It's time for Shevolution!



John Phebe Ifeoluwa hails from the western part of Nigeria. She is a student currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Agriculture at the University of Ilorin. Ifeoluwa is a poet and a neurodivergent writer. She is passionate about literature and likes to express her thoughts and life through poetry.

She has had her works published in the Soulinspace monthly magazine, a college anthology named "Zango X", Shevolution magazine, and currently undergoing publishing at the Mockingowlroosters and Eboquills. She debates and sings at her leisure. Ifeoluwa resides in Port Harcourt City with her family.

Portrait Of A Girl In Her Sweet Sixteen

By Alobu Emmanuel

after Hassan Usman.

A girl's body is the crescendo of a cave; carrying so many buried things so many fears and fossils.

Who says girls are candles?
that they melt away at the flicker of flames?
See, a girl doesn't feel emotion,
emotion feels her;
She doesn't feel pain,
pain only fills her

Because being a girl means
you should smile and say:
"Nothing. I'm fine"
When the monthly visitor comes.

You should beg for escorts
when walking ghostly streets
when visiting a man
lest your tummy grows, growing another life.

You should be a big *mommy*to your kid sister
& a mother to your brother.
You'll be your father's wife
& the shoulder he leans on.



It means you remain silent
to uncle's advances,
Daddy would hear of no such thing about his brother
And mother would exorcise your lips with olive oil,
making the sign of the cross thereafter

The world doesn't know that a girl is the sea; plain on the surface, but inside filled.

She's an unread book, already abandoned.
She's the protagonist
& antagonist in her own story.

Alobu Emmanuel alias Noble Alobu, is the convener of the Noble Poet Collective (NPC). He's currently a student of Philosophy at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. Inspired by belief, love and strife, his writings oftentimes, feel like a hug. He is an alumnus of the SprinNG Writing Fellowship. Some of his poems are featured in "Red Penguins Collection", "Agape Review", "NantyGreens", "Eboquills", "Celestite Poetry", and "HotPot Magazine". He believes nature holds a great deal of magic and loves to spend time with his pet chicken, Juliet. Catch him on threads..

@noble_alobu

Our Girls - Their Voice, Their Virtues and Vices

By Muhammad Hafsat Giwa

Our larynx has long died from within and we can no longer utter our words through the mouth, the echoing sound of our long silenced pain vibrates in protest to this wicked evil. Trapped in generations

of unfair equality, we sing with hopes of being heard, a culture that has turned a deaf ear to the festering ills, a protester of anything that makes HER visible. Silence a home well known, with blood walls

of our mothers who dared to say the word, *mba, rara, aa,* no, blood walls of pain & anguish, heedless to our tears, that our spirit, our souls should live in this home so that the people in it could grow like wild

weeds, reaping where they do not sow, every breath, every wake, with each step we take to becoming, a wicked evil lurks around in the disguise of society, in the disguise of a culture telling us how to breathe our

own air. Ambushed within our own bodies, like a heavy silver bowl that sinks in the water, we sink six feet under unable to move a muscle, for society is the sea that does not fail to sink us.

Muhammad Hafsat Giwa is a poet and writer, whose writing started off at an early age but also has an immense passion for spoken word poetry and hopes to explore its diverse nature with time. She is a lover of nature who finds her muse in it, culture, society, and the world at large. She is committed and open to growth not just in her writing life but physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

She grew up in Abuja FCT, attended Government Girls' Secondary school Dutse, finished her diploma program in Library and Information Science at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, and is currently waiting for admission to further her studies.

Hafsat writes from her heart and personal experiences and hopes that her voice will reach out to the world and soothe the hearts of those who need it.

Connect with her on

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Facebook: @Hafsat Giwa



My Father's Daughter

By Agada Akor Nathaniel

Her gender is now known for grinding something from nothing My sister is purposefully running at the pace of lightning EBO is out there burning down the demons in her evening While Dr. Cindy Trimm is somewhere commanding her morning See how these rivers became a daring ocean Transforming into veritable tools from a very faulty tradition Their spoken declarations now breath breadth to their dimensions In the midst of these stubborn seas of macho molestations Today the brain behind the beautiful branding of superstars Is a lady that still changes baby diapers My gender now sees her on different newspapers Creating, leading important conversations among power brokers This girl is a diamond that is purpose driven Beyond her culinary skills in my mother's kitchen She now makes lively lions off lily livered kittens Who once had the chickened guts of chickens My sister is no longer that fragile flower Dreading the intimidating seasons in the garden of my father She has since evolved into something bigger and better My father's daughter is the alluring fragrance behind an alabaster

Agada Akor Nathaniel is a graduate of Economics from the Benue State University Makurdi. The songwriter, singer, and multiple award-winning poet was born in Kaduna in the early 1990s. His works have appeared in magazines, anthologies, and online platforms.

Still Echoes; her voice of silence By Esther M Dakum

Dreams of classrooms sizzle in the kitchen, glowing like the flames beneath pots
Lithe hands clean before the sunrise, saving time for an early walk to school
Time flows no doubt when lean turns plump becoming a beauty to behold
Money's short with little or less to keep the family going, a miracle is needed
A streak of blood can only mean one thing, plump step into womanhood
Suitors start to hover around like vultures, their requests are considered a
glimmer of hope

In a matter of weeks, she is dressed finely to accompany her suitor home

Five years after, a toddler and a suckling to show forth

A lot has changed as lithe hands scoured and scrub till they are wintry

Hopes of a classroom glimpse has long been buried and forgotten

A ban placed on her, she can't trade or earn meager profit

Once dinner wasn't served on time, a slap was a befitting reward
The very act that charged violence against her little kingdom
A once gracefully form battered beyond recognition
Like samba she took the hits till her unborn child was gone with the wind
her world became haunted, yet she a faithful soldier, she nodded to every
command in silence

Once she longed to dance, taking a few steps he called her crazy and beat his tunes of wrath on her, beating life out of her But gracefully she used her only weapon to cut through the raging chaos that took so much from her

There she watched her world of violence crumble down as she bled away from all that living was worth.

Esther M Dakum is an undergraduate student at the University of Jos, whose world revolves around imagery and imagination, and a believer in the likeness we were created to be. She is a painter, using words alongside the canvas to capture depths untold.

Esther loves to say that the weakest ink is greater than the sharpest memory hence she works towards being a voice to the voiceless. In between writing and painting, volunteering for societal impact is one of the many things she does. Esther believes that change starts with us hence the need to take a step towards being the change we wish to see.

Lamentations of a Girl By Adewuyi Taiwo

Why am I the wife of my father, the shoulder beam on which his roof hangs? My leg is the pillar of the home. I am the one who worships his sons Like tantrum-prone gods, why am I the assistant mother of his children?

The bubbling pot, the mumbling cot, fermenting rot are all my duties by birth

By gender I must surrender my wrists to the shackles of society,

The kitchen is a girl's prison and her grave. The boy is always a prince in distress that she

Must save, with a knife as her weapon and the pan as her shield.

I must not be a lazy lady, I must be a domestic animal,

Menstruation is the pain I must look forward to,

It is my certainty of a future where my back will carry children— sons, preferably

And so am I to be sold on my wedding to any boy whose very fart smells like a new note.

My face must be my canvas, to paint a landscape of beauty for whoever steals my heart.

I may have strong weaknesses but I don't have weak strengths,
I am good as I am, slim or fat, coal-black, snow-white
Bright brown, figure eight, watermelon breasts, metallic voice
...or not, I am a complete human being, not merely a womb, a pair of hands,
I have a voice and I have a choice in life besides being a wife
My body is not a sculpture to be undressed by electronic eyes.

Adewuyi Taiwo hails from Osun state, Nigeria. Writing is more than a hobby to him, it is an addiction, spurring him to write diversely on societal norms and quite occasionally, fantasies. Poetry to him, is just like giving birth to children. Of this, he has become the father of many beautiful children.



Puzzle Pieces By OMOLASOYE Busoye

Complexity veils my name, a mystic enigma.

Silenced, yet my song resounds in the breeze.

For girls like me,

It's a challenging stigma.

A paradox, an enigma never unraveled.

Beyond trauma,

my cage holds my rage.

An incomplete masterpiece, forever embattled.

Causing the fall of kings, though misunderstood.

Rooted in authenticity,

doubt shadows my worth.

Reality, a facade, just a taste, never enough.

Unattainable, an ultimatum I must face.

Victim of laws, my flaws under the spotlight.

For girls like me,

The struggles we embrace.

Look at my journey, the distance I've tread.

Not the first, nor second, but the last to conclude.

I hold the finishing touch

where others fled.



Born on July 14, 2004, OMOLASOYE Busoye, a native of Ilawo in Ejigbo local government, Osun State, attended Staff primary school, Federal College of Education Okene, Kogi State. A student of Grace and Glory Secondary School in Osogbo, Osun State (2015-2021), but presently a 300-level student of Communication Arts at Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria.

She desires to be dynamic as a beacon of light that draws people into discovering their identity. Broadening the societal intellectual horizons on the complexity of communication, she wants to create a platform of self-realization that voices out the minds of many.



TITI By Jimoh Adeiza Abdulrahaman

Pa was a farmer. Ma was the fertile soil where he sowed me & Titi. we adored Titi's teeth & face 'cause they're as charming as a meteor shower. when Ma went on eternal hiatus to live with her creator, Pa picked up a pestle & pounded Ma's cuisine inside Titi's soul. Pa must

have pounded hard, as Titi's light ebbed away & her soul broke

into fragments; frail pieces of puzzle strange with each other. I saw Titi's eyes bleed tears inside the kitchen; I saw the kitchen knife miss *ugwu* leaves to bite her fingers;

I saw her soul fretting during her eighteenth birthday when

Strange men shared our breakfast table, tasting
Titi's tea. I was mad...they smiled. Pa smiled.
Titi was sad. I saw her muffled whimpers
as she later folded frayed skirts into neat

squares. where was she going? i asked the air. wheeze & silence.

Titi took me to school. en route, i asked her to make a wish. and she wept. wept to be as blessed as me—a boy child, who's *choiceful* & goes to school every day.

Jimoh Adeiza Abdulrahaman is Ebira and writes from Bauchi State, where he's undergoing his undergraduate study in the field of Chemical Engineering at ATBU, Bauchi.

Abdulrahaman is an emerging fiction writer, poet, and essayist who's passionate and writes about humanity. One of his CNFs was recently longlisted for the maiden edition of the Abubakar Gimba Prize for Creative Nonfiction. His other works have appeared/forthcoming in SprinNG, Poetic Africa issue 10, and Fiftywords stories. He tweets @jimohabdul19. On Facebook @Jimmyabdy.



Why? By Joy Charlie

Why chase a man
When I can chase my dreams
Like the night chases the day?

Why am I told to be quiet

To be seen, to appear, but never be heard

Whereas I have words buried inside me

Clamouring for a chance to be heard

Why am I taught to feel

To take it all in

But never express my feelings

When my heart keeps pumping emotions

As quickly as it pumps blood

Why follow a crowded path
Walking in the shoes of the past
When there are a thousand places
For my feet to leave its mark

Why tell me to be loyal

For it is a man's world

But refer to nature as "mother"

That births and provide for all



Joy Charlie is an undergraduate student of sociology and anthropology, University of Uyo. She is an avid reader and a creative thinker. Joy employs her creative prowess in her writings, the majority of which are poems. On campus, she is actively involved in volunteering her time to create positive change through the Rotaract club of the University of Uyo where she is a bonafide member. Although her works are not published yet, Joy loves writing and hopes to make a career out of it in the future.



We are more than gods By Sa'ada Isa Yahaya

God can't be everywhere.

That's why he created mothers.

Who says a girl knows nothing more than grief?

In this poem, she rebirths everything into beauty.

Watch her pluck the stars and they won't shatter.

Hold her (still)- you may just grow into everything you have ever wanted.

Beyond this poem, call her a goddess carrying brokenness in her belly.

How long will you deny her perfection?

Her ability to birth beams, create dreams, and sow seeds.

The society has sworn to remain a box of limitation.

Say -no matter how old the skin becomes, it never dissolves.

A girl is the strongest of everything living.

Mold her into anything, she won't break.

On the day the night folded itself into our skin,

Maa swore that she was hungry for God's palms (for light).

That the world was a dialect her tongue couldn't carry.

I tongued into her;

Your body - a deity of divinity.

You are light- L E A D.

Sa'ada Isa Yahaya is a fifteen-year-old Nigerian teenage author, Poet, and spoken word artist. She is a member of the Hilltop Creative Art Foundation and a student of Jewel Model School. Sa'ad is the second runner-up for the 2023 National Creative Writing Competition For Secondary Schools. Her works have appeared or are forthcoming in New Voices Magazine, World Voices Magazine, Synchronized Chaos, and elsewhere.



Broken PrincessBy Julius Morno

The world is an old broken Mistress

Whose sanity hangs on a gray hair strand

Her heart is frozen to stillness

She was once a beautiful girl
Running errands through dusty footpaths
With a heart full of wonderful dreams

And she would have been a queen
Had she not flirted with tyrants
And tortured men of goodwill

But now she looks old and broken

As she peers at pictures of her raped youth

She's lost her innocence and with it her compassion

And so she desires a new face and body

But her mind is sick and her heart is killing her

And she asked for new artificial ones to be made

She stands and admires her plastic face and new body
And feels good with her synthetic heart and brain
She doesn't mind if the machines take over

Although her lost humanity still haunts her

She had gone too far to numb her pains

Just a small price to pay in search of a life of bliss

Julius Morno is an author and filmmaker from Nigeria. He is a graduate of the National Film Institute in Jos, Nigeria. Julius has attended many trainings and workshops at home and abroad in the areas of storytelling, scriptwriting, and directing. Right from a young age, Julius has always been passionate about the writing of prose and poetry, a craft he has been honing even before going to film school. Julius Morno's writings, mainly revolve around human stories, experiences, and the human condition, themes that are always close to his heart.



Our Girls - Their Voice, Virtue, and Vices By Ekawu Elizabeth Imaji

In the beginning, was the word, the word was us, the word was girls.

So, I begin this piece with a prayer, for girls too big couldn't fit into the ocean,

For girls who could fit and stand fit into a country,

For girls who have been blown like fireworks because they wanted to fly

She's not a legal tender, she's not tears cremated inside an understatement Because she succumbs under her own country's madness.

She's your greatest nightmare. not your puppet, she's fire and flame.

Not your pawn, she's laughter. not tears, she's an offering not embers.

She's GIRL.

I hear 'man' is the general name for man and woman, So I asked my teacher, what day was sister created? He said, she's man. so on the 6th day, but no She was created on the first day for she is light

Ekawu Elizabeth Imaji, a 16-year-old Nigerian poet, essayist, spoken word artist, storyteller, feminist, writer, and believer. She is the winner of Words, Rhyme and Rhythm 2022 oral poetry and first runner-up in poetry. She won first place Uzo- Udegbunam poetry prize and first and second runner-up at the HIASFEST 2022 and 2021 respectively for spoken word. She has graced many stages and platforms. She is a student and a member of the Hilltop Creative Art Foundation.



Our Girls: Their voice, virtue, and vices

By Msughaondo Sunday Tersue

In golden rays, young voices bloom,
Our Girls, with dreams that break the gloom.
Virtue their armor, grace their might,
They radiate love, like stars at night.

But vices haunt their tender souls, Like shadows cast upon their goals. Yet let us hold them, flaws and all, And watch them rise, never to fall.

Their dreams, like wings, will take them high,
As they conquer mountains in the sky.
With voices strong, they'll mend the rifts,
And heal the world with gentle shifts.

In unity, let's pave their way,

To a future bright, where they hold sway.

Our Girls, empowered, fierce, and true,

We stand beside, and we cheer you.

Our Girls, a testament of love's flare.
In their journey, may we find
A world where equality is defined.

Msughaondo Sunday Tersue, a freelance writer and author from Benue State, Nigeria, is known for his profound narratives. He authored "Embracing Shadows," a book on relationship complexities. Currently a student at Benue State University, he's passionate about travel, football, and reading. Msughaondo's goal is to leave a lasting impact on the literary world, inviting readers to delve into the depths of human existence and introspection through his thought-provoking works. His personal motto, "The God we all seek to worship is right there in our conscience," reflects his belief in the innate divinity within each individual, and this philosophy shines through in his writing. He is reachable via email at msughaondotersue@gmail.com



Litany for a broken girl - lady - woman By Fortune Simeon

The day your mother gave birth to you, she tongued into the mirror -

"May you dulcify souls and become the self-portrait of heaven installed into a butterfly"

At age 6, you watched wrinkles on mother multiply, pray that the beginning flakes towards the end.

At age 16, you morphed into a prey between your father's jaws. Your walls bloom into a cauldron, into grief, into

everything your

mother did not wish for a butterfly.

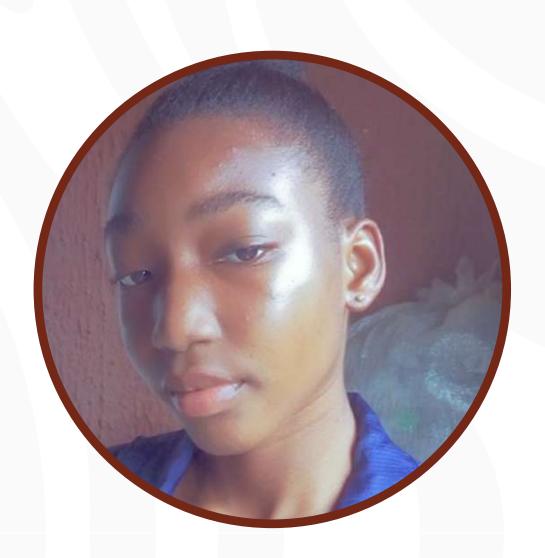
At age 26, you learned the broken language of the skies-

how you throw your hands to the sky and pray for a smile never to fold into silence.

Today, your dead mother held tears on her lips, and sat with you. She said:

"Baby, you're anything but broken and your power to brew grief into something beautiful is your beauty".

Fortune Simeon is a fifteen-year-old Nigerian poet and short story writer. She is a member of the Hilltop Creative Arts Foundation, Abuja. She has contributed to literary magazines including Eunoia Review, Synchronized Chaos, and elsewhere. She can be seen on IG as simeon_fortune and on Facebook as Fortune Simeon.



ObinrinBy IBRAHIM ADEDEJI SALVATORE

she wears allure like a second skin over a delicate structure

sleek & slender,
fleshy & tender
she's the poetry of light
& many colours

a metaphor for butterfles & flowers that bloom in a prosaic mind.

man's first home & remains his only place of worship when

the world of his body is burning.

•••

IBRAHIM ADEDEJI SALVATORE is a poet and a literary enthusiast. He is inspired by the beauty and therapeutics of the art of creative writing. His poems, which mostly revolve around the themes of love and memories, have appeared in several poetry anthologies and elsewhere. He writes from Ibadan, Nigeria.

Gender-based Violence Ndukwo Mary Chidinma

Silent cries, unheard pleas.

All this and more are the unwanted fleas,

Plaguing our days without a lease.

In the shadows of a broken world,

A story of pain and anguish remains untold,

The story for today, a deadly disease that fills our way.

Behind closed doors, this story is told, an open secret.

Hatred leaves deep scars carved to the surface of our hearts,

Gender-based violence is a deadly disease, that has made many deceased.

Together we shall fight this plague with love and empathy,

Together we will drive and fight violence against women,

Like we did with all the other plagues.

Ndukwo Mary Chidinma, known by her pen name, Chidinma, is a passionate swim instructor and lifeguard with a remarkable talent for writing. She recently completed a prestigious writing residency at Ebedi Writers Residency in Iseyin, where she honed her skills and deepened her commitment to the written word.

Chidinma's writing is driven by a profound love for advocating the rights and empowerment of the girl child. Her literary works stand as a testament to her dedication to championing gender equality and women's rights. As a staunch feminist, she uses her words to inspire change and challenge societal norms.

With a unique blend of her aquatic expertise and her powerful pen, Chidinma continues to make a significant impact in both the pool and the literary world. Her life's journey is an inspiring tale of dedication, advocacy, and the pursuit of meaningful change.

Dear Grandmother By Neba Terry-Phebe Ngum

"An apple does not fall far from its tree"

That was your favorite adage to me.

But what about an apple with maggots in it?

Whose demerit could this be?

Dear Grandmother, I am sorry,

My feet took me where your wisdom will term folly;
I parade myself in scarfs

Big enough only to shield a scar,

My tongue twists between my teeth,
I religiously drilled for countless weeks

Losing the language of my mouth

My identity, confounded!

My peel now reflects like the blazing sun,

A Few weeks of 'cleansing' and black beauty is gone!

Daily I lament for muddled is my skull,

It's naked of the virtues you tirelessly installed!

Dear Encyclopedia of Heritage,
The continuity of our culture now lies with you in the grave!
I guess the tree is not to be blamed
For the *perverse* nature of its grains.

Neba Terry-Phebe Ngum is an emerging poet and spoken word artist from Cameroon. Some of her poems have been published by online platforms like Access Point Africa, Writersspace Africa, Demogog, Cultural Reference, and Raising Voices For Peace. She is also the first runner-up of the Southern Cameroon Poetry Awards 2022. You can find her on Facebook @Bleeding quill, and Instagram @Nebaterry.



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Eboquills Publication 2023

I am honored to have edited this anthology - In the Memory of Girls Who Built Their Dreams Far From Home. Eboquills' goal for this project was to amplify our girls' voices as they have been backup singers in our society's choral for too long. I am sure we switched things up a bit, we just can't put an exact decibel to it now.

Like me, I am certain you will have many finger-snapping moments as you read this book.

Enjoy!

Ehi-kowoicho Ogwiji, Editor, October 2023.