

The background of the cover is a photograph of a large suspension bridge with a prominent arch, spanning a river. The bridge's steel structure is intricate, with many cables supporting the deck. The river below is calm, reflecting the bridge and the sky. The surrounding landscape is lush with green trees and vegetation. The sky is a clear blue with some light, wispy clouds. In the top left corner, there is a grey oval containing the letters 'IPJ' in a stylized, black, serif font.

IPJ

# Ijagun Poetry Journal

**Vol. 1, No. 2**

**November 2 013**

*New Faces, New Voices, and New Tradition...*

# **IJAGUN POETRY JOURNAL**

**Vol. 1 – No. 2**

**November 2013**

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*Edited by*

**Gabriel Bamgbose**

*Tai Solarin University of Education*



**Ijagun  
Nigeria**

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## Editor's Note

Never again will a single story be told as though it were the only one.

*John Berger*

*Ijagun Poetry Journal* acquires its name from “Ijagun,” the location of Tai Solarin University of Education, the premier university of education in Nigeria, where I earned my first degree and now teach. “Ijagun” is a Yoruba word which I will roughly translate as **warring**. It is pertinent to note that “Ijagun,” for me, transcends the “small” location in the map of Ogun State; it becomes a metaphor of life in my imagination. *Life is war* as claimed in a Yoruba adage. Though life is war, not all fight the war! Some initiate it, some bear its burden. Some die in it, some flee from it. Some lose everything in it, some claim its spoil. Even in war, there are moments – moments of celebration, moments of mourning; moments of conquest, moments of surrender; moments of laughter, moments of sorrow; moments of courage, moments of fear; moments of relief, moments of tension; moments of madness, moments of sanity; moments of life, moments of death, and there are even moments that foil any form of description. War/Life does not possess a single story. But poetry can contain the diversities of these stories life/war holds. Thus, *poetry is a living form through which we can spin the web of life*.

*Ijagun Poetry Journal* provides a platform from which we can tell our own stories in the authenticity of their multiplicity through the poetic medium. Rather than focus our poetic lens on one side of our story, we intend to project the whole sides of our story – the good and the evil, the holy and the profane, the trivial and the serious, the tragic and the comic, the corrupt and the just, the heroic and the villainous, the rich and the poor, love and hatred, men and women, and so on, especially those that blur the borders of the binary categories of those experiences we are familiar with.

Moreover, we don't want to hear these stories from our master “griots” alone; we want to hear from those mastering their art too. Hence, we aim at publishing new and emerging poets. We also welcome the works of established poets in order to encourage the poetic genius of those mastering poetic art. We prize original works that conform to or break conventions. Again, we accept reviews and essays on poetry (For submission guidelines, see <http://www.ijagunpoetryjournal.wordpress.com/submissions-3/> ).

*Ijagun Poetry Journal* presents a platform for poetic development for those who possess the propensity for creative maturity. *Ijagun* is all about poetry!

*Gabriel Bamgbose*

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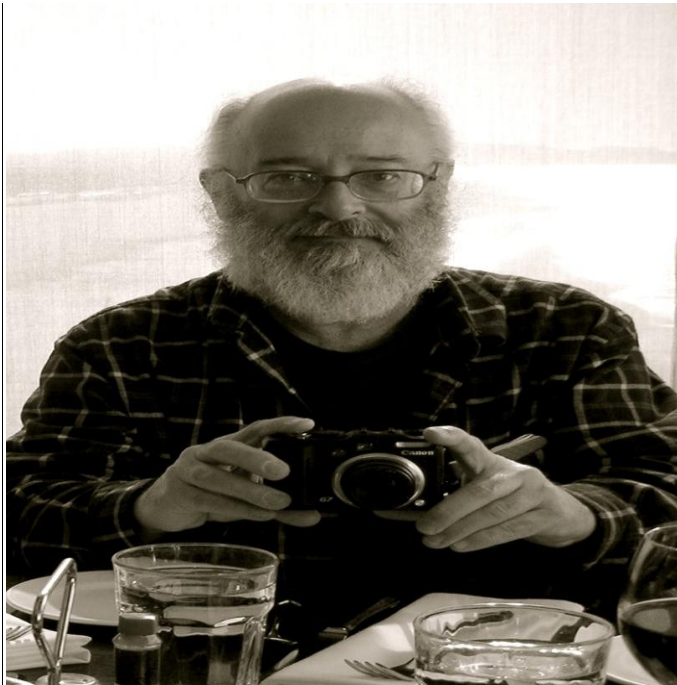
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## John Landry



John Landry's poems have appeared in *Elective Affinities*, *Elohi Gadugi*, *ditch*, *Heartfire*, *Istanbul Literary Review*, *Xcp cross-cultural poetics*, and *Perfume River Poetry Review*. He read his work at the Library of Congress at the invitation of Gwendolyn Brooks. He served as poet laureate for the city of his birth, New Bedford, Massachusetts, in the long shadows of Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville.

### ***Waking up crazy*** (for Raúl Zurita of Chile)

I woke after a fitful sleep  
restless & tired  
in America  
the death of swelling fruit  
the death  
of 1/2 opened fruit  
the death distended  
of 1/2 written poems  
the death  
of 1/2 an unrequited love  
the stinking death  
of academia acadanemia  
the thin blood of critics and theorists  
black on the walls of every building  
as the rich red blood of the poet  
seeps thru the walls and into the laps  
of those students who can hear it  
crawling between the library  
and back into the street

where its origin rides the wind  
 and in the water draining to the sea  
 to where all sacred space resides  
 libraries are as sacred as groves  
 of walking talking trees who hold  
 the words and songs of all Time's poets

***Washington, 1986***

*(for Martin Carter of Guyana, 1927-1997)*

On Valentine's Day  
 I have transgressed good order  
 & incommoded traffic  
 in front of 1600  
 Pennsylvania Avenue.  
 There is tradition in  
 reminding governments  
 of the job in need of doing

Arrested then on  
 the White House lawn  
 for unlawful entry –  
 trying to educate  
 the hearts and minds  
 of an administration  
 dumb and blind  
 to the world outside the gate  
 I am arrested for transgression  
 I am a disruptive integer

***Ocean Song***

*(one more in the Key of Sea, for Everett Hoagland)*

i am no -ist  
 i have no -ism

the flow i roll with  
 is myself

am consoled  
 by all sharp edges  
 smoothed by endless



moving water

(the Sea its own  
reign of logic  
tears wrack from rock  
in an infinite gesture)

all arguments with myself  
i am able to sooth

water always finds its way  
over, under, around & thru

no need ask "is  
that where the Sea is?"  
wherever water is  
i am that self-same Sea

what i wash upon	what i wash away
i give flotsam	i take jetsam
the moon pulleth	the moon pusheth away

without intention  
i flow

i am flow  
having nothing  
to cling to

## Mark Blok



The product of immigrants from Russia, but born and raised in South Florida, Mark Blok, 27, has been quietly grazing pages filled with literature and lyrical compositions. Before the age of 10, he was published *Anthology of Poetry By Young Americans*. At the age of 19, he sold his first instrumental arrangement. After moving to the New York City at the age of 23, he wrote and produced a folk record (Mark Blok EP), and even participated in short film projects for their musical scores. But with very little direction, he moved back to South Florida to start from the scratch. He is back in school completing a degree in English Literature, while still pursuing creative works in the process.

### ***The Echoes of Uncertainty***

The echoing rhythms of agonizing pulses strike the nerves of a dying soul,  
Every breath moves slower waiting,  
while the painful minor melody trickles into the life of  
a frail young child.

The fingers of a gentle thud have laid upon an ivory pound,  
Shocking the heart with a jolt to his chest,  
as electric uncertainty decides the fate of a sudden  
spell.

A familiar crowd parades in madness,  
weeping religiously in the night,  
Eagerly awaiting a verdict.

***Snow Day!***

Walking in the mid of afternoon  
 Crowded children come together  
 Snow day!  
 The graceful falling of the impeccable  
 Snowflakes bind like piles of the virgin  
 Shed Persian like rug touch of the surface  
 In the backyard of the crowded  
 West side brick layered houses  
 There are days like these  
 Where still, as animals, we put aside  
 Our immaturity and play like the infants we are  
 And the only soundtrack plays is the natural brethren breeze  
 And underlying are echoes of whispers between the trees

***New York! New York!***

Like the traditions of wedding days, I refuse to see you before I commit to you fully. I  
 am sowing my royal oats, exploring my wildest demons; I long for your midnight strolls,  
 your schizo town and...you never stop! It never stops!  
 The sandpaper pavements, the scent of crazy souls sayin': "HALLELUJAH!"  
 I long for your hands and feet, though tired to move, I am crawling at the mercy of  
 my knees to meet you once more and never let you go.

## Kousik Adhikari



Kousik Adhikari, an Indian research scholar, has several publications consisting of both creative and critical writings, published in India, Nepal, USA, and Thailand. He is interested in literature, linguistics and cultural studies. He has over 20 publications of poems.

### ***Meaning***

People ask for meaning  
 I don't know what it is!  
 Meaning is the last retreat  
 That philosophers smell even after  
 A stuffing lunch  
 It's the last wagon  
 Carrying a pregnant woman  
 For early metamorphosis  
 And delayed whimpers  
 I generally do not care  
 For pregnant woman or meaning either  
 For me Sunday is always  
 Sun day and Monday is perhaps  
 Moon day, yet to be rotten  
 Rain always a running river  
 And *giirrrl*, a jarring sound  
 Catch hold of throat  
 Like a bait, impossible to utter  
 Nor you can swallow it harmlessly,  
 While the wind whacking  
 The remaining clouds day by day  
 You flutter like a new-born butterfly

Let me smell.  
 I stand on the street where none dares to stop  
 And certainly no meaning  
 For my early cognizance.

### ***Nights and Snake***

He often whispers,  
 'You, the snake charmer, sometimes  
 Step into our house too.' I darted out  
 And after the busy nights of caresses  
 When he lays astray on smoky pillow  
 I trailed myself to the window, caressing myself  
 Out of fear, outside the chilly night  
 Debars the slightest poison  
 Heroes of archaic years stand in the cue  
 With their mourning hand and the broken swords  
 Something is there that needs something  
 And my coiling snakes  
 Murmuring, mourning, hissing into my ears  
 'You, the snake charmer,  
 Sometimes step into our house too.'

### ***A Letter to Rain***

Dear rain, tonight I shall drench  
 All my icy necessities, fumbling hesitations  
 Innuendos and evening that could call me  
 By my nick name  
 Seasons are real darlings and you –  
 If I could desire, my changed attires thrown aside  
 Like the pavements that ran with the cars  
 Missing and lost.

Plato and everything – they smelt  
 And what tip tap musings through your curves,  
 I hesitate to see, feel shy, during my green desires  
 Till you let me touch, know.  
 Tonight when the sun left us untold, dark,  
 Will you call me by the name? Blushing fool!  
 Then let's dance  
 In this shining rain

Like the ancient frogs still to know  
The delights of the earth's desire or water,  
Dancing, missing and lost.

## Adeola Goloba



Adeola Oladimeji Goloba (born on 13th July, 1973) is a radical writer, poet and journalist. He had a Diploma in Accounting & Auditing from Kwara State Polytechnic (1996) and a B.A in Linguistics from University of Ilorin (2004). He is a member of the Association of Nigerian Authors, Lagos Chapter. He currently is the assistant editor of *Awori Magazine*. Adeola currently manages the blog, MEMORIES <<http://adeola-goloba.blogspot.com/>>.

### ***They Wasted their Money...***

Did you say they are so penniless  
That they cannot afford a bottle of honey?  
No! They were the most affluent  
But they wasted their money.

Did I hear they are so helpless  
That they cannot feed their concubines?  
No! They were the wealthiest  
But they wasted their money.

Are they really indigent  
Their children cannot go to school?  
No! They were the richest  
But they wasted their money.

They claim they own this Lagoon  
And are yet treated like strangers.  
But No! They were the most influential  
Only that they cared not and wasted their money.

Ah! Are they really pauperized  
 They can't ever trade themselves out of darkness?  
 "Oh Yes...*Alausa* knows our plight!"  
 That is what they are waiting for.

Deadly flood threatens to plague their lives  
 Yet, they sit on the fence  
 Wasting their money  
 And blaming their chairmen.

Their glittering sky-scrapers  
 Are surrounded by slummy ghettos,  
 Yet, they are so indifferent, wasting their money  
 And crying foul of one man at the top!

Waite a minute! Are they really bad?  
 Maybe (not)! But they sell and resell their lands  
 And must claim *Omo-Onile's* dues  
 Completely lost to the lyrical tunes of their local poets.

On those senseless murderous affairs,  
 They waste their money.  
 Wines, women, pursuit of night-clubs  
 And funeral parties of their fallen kinsmen.

They go on wasting their money,  
 Their time, their lives wasting away,  
 Their status fading...  
 Yet, they never wake up  
 From this gain-less extravagant slumber...

### ***Tears of a Bleeding Heart***

Her fragile soul is constantly aching  
 As it keeps on sinking deep into aging  
 Her tender heart never stops breaking  
 For the pirate's poisonous axe will not cease chopping

Her noble soul is so pale and weak  
 Oh! My heart bleeds as I speak  
 'Coz her golden treasures have been ceased by evil hands...  
 (Her fellow kinsmen 'n' their grotto masters in foreign lands)



Oh! My heart bleeds so...as I speak  
 'Coz her soul is so pale and weak  
 How her milky wells are running dry  
 While she keeps on writhing in pain 'n' cry

What paradox how her trust's been cunningly jaded  
 How her dignity stripped 'n' greedily traded  
 Just for a single trinket 'n' transient tinsels  
 By the ones she thought were her Guardian Angels

Her heart keeps on breaking without caution  
 She cannot fight back...she has no option  
 Seeing their filthy lifestyles drives her crazy  
 While she strives hard to live 'n' avoid being lazy

Oh! My heart bleeds so as I speak  
 'Coz her very fragile soul is so pale 'n' weak  
 What will stop the tears of this bleeding heart?  
 Is there no more miracles here on earth?

### ***Our Tales***

From many seasons of carnage  
 We have grown to be like a clan of savage

Why do we always go on rampage  
 To slaughter one another and ravage?

Every cock-crow at dawn  
 Horror wakes us and again strikes us down

We cannot go to sleep without fears and cries  
 At night when the whole clan crumbles and lies

Because we roast our own folks to ashes  
 Mother Nature whips us with painful lashes

Bakasi Boys...Boko Haram! Please...you must go to rest  
 Lay down your arms like the OPC in the West

No more pastoral and imamate clashes  
 Let's guard ourselves from political rashes

But why do we always go on rampage  
To slaughter ourselves and ravage?

Fight over oil, land or some sacred cake  
Seized by some modicum scrooge to rake?

We have heads but cannot think  
Water we possess but cannot drink

Enough food but still rage on with hunger  
No wonder we always let loose with anger

We have shelter but no place to hide  
While we run helter-skelter when we take side

Storming with vengeance like maddening flood  
Here lie our body in boiling pools of blood

Ah! We have life...we cannot live  
But when shall all these strives finally take leave?

Our home is burning...Oh where do we go?  
Everywhere is already set aglow

From every of the zones  
Across the plains echoes the clinging of our bones

Endless strives...what did we gain?  
Save mourning, cries of woes and pain

Shall we not end these seasons of carnage?  
And cease to be like a clan of savage?

Come together to clear our ravages  
And move to undone the damages

Call on God to send down His Merciful Aids  
And save us from untold wanton and AIDS

God Please! Send down your soothing rain!  
To come cool and wash away our burning pain

Calm our anger and rages  
And make us again like old sages

Give us profitable life  
Let us live like true brothers...free us from strife

Give us beautiful places here to hide  
And let our space be wide

Let all stakeholders sow love and not tarry  
Upon greed and hatred that we now carry

Like a phoenix rebuild our nation  
And let each clan harvest its ration

No more rampages  
No more slaughter and ravages

Let us end these seasons of carnage  
And cease to be like a clan of savage

What legends shall be left for the unborn  
When we go yonder and leave the stage to burn?

What chants will roll on their tongues  
When they come to behold our wrongs?

Brothers! If we end not these seasons of carnage  
And cease not to be like a clan of savage

Our tales shall be like that "Ballad of Rage"  
Told from the first to the very last historical page.

## Anthony Ward



Anthony Ward has been writing in his spare time for a number of years. He has been published in a number of literary magazines including *The Autumn Sound*, *The Faircloth* *Review*, *Word Gumbo*, *Four and Twenty*, *Drunk Monkeys*, *Underground*, *Torrid Literature Journal*, and *The Rusty Nail*, amongst others.

### ***Projection Moulding***

They say we grow into ourselves!  
 Though that suggests we have to grow into something  
 To fill in the space of something bigger than what we are,  
 As if we're currently too small to fit into our surroundings,  
 Looking towards being condensed and confined  
 Into the mould that shapes us.

### ***Sides***

Life may not be fair  
 Amongst this uneven world.

Being at odds with everything  
 That turns out to be nothing.

Becoming discontented by what we're not  
 While compensated by what we've got.

Preparing ourselves for any tale  
 We take at face value.

***The Power and the Power***

There's those who want to fix the world  
And those who're fixing the world.  
There's those who buy it  
And those who don't buy it.  
Commemorating the suit,  
Not those in the soot  
With the world on their shoulders  
And the world at their feet.

The Power and the Power,  
Who work the land into an industry  
Taking a mere couple of centuries to consume  
What'd taken millions of years to produce,  
Motivated by machines  
Fuelled by fossilised trees that once harboured the CO<sub>2</sub>  
That's being released by their chimneys into clouds of concrete mist,  
With the sound of hammers striking the anvil,  
Creating sparks which ignite the sky,  
While shutting us in –  
Like a press bearing down.

## Emmanuel Akor



Emmanuel Akor is an aspiring writer and poet from Benue state of Nigeria. The 19 year old, who is currently studying computer science in the University of Brasilia, Brazil, fell in love with poetic art from the age of 12 and had since kept ink and paper close to his heart, expressing ideas with deep imagination. He hopes to become a famous poet and writer in the near future.

### ***Cursed love***

Elixir, the begetter of a merchant's fortune  
 Music of love, an expired tune  
 Whisky, the comforter of a broken heart  
 While memories spurn to depart

Actions are slow and quiet  
 Thoughts unable to kick the bucket  
 Roses wither alongside smile  
 A sweet virtue, cursed and defiled

### ***Unhappy Endings***

Unwanted pregnancies bewildered by untamed penises  
 Conclusions render hope of conceiving babies  
 Blanketed, misfortuned skin toned in worthy appearance  
 And bewitching dreams blemished by disparaging reality

Scepticism of mind on elusive presence of love  
 Despairing hearts provoked upon waiting for true love  
 Wishing wells rich yet fruitless  
 And time vanishes leaving hearts unaided

***Magnificent Sight***

Fireflies in the night  
Moving towards the moonlight  
Magnificent sight

## Kris Price



Kris Price has an A.A. in Behavioral and Social Sciences from Modesto Junior College. He is currently attending University of Montana, Missoula, where he is studying Creative Writing and Film Studies. Kris was an assistant editor for *Quercus Review*, and *Snail Mail Review*. He is working on his first chap book. His work has appeared in *Penumbra*, *Emerge*, *The Fine Line*, *Crack the Spine*, *The Literary Yard*, the Modesto Poetry Anthology, *More than Soil*, *More than Sky*, the Newer York Press, Diversion Press, Pressboard Press, Eastern Point Press and Red Ochre Press. He was awarded second place in Kay Ryan's Community College Poetry Project contest that she held during her term as the United States Poet Laureate. He has recently read at Lit Crawl in San Francisco.

### **Ode to Punica Granatum**

I  
As I carve into you  
I'm reminded of Holy Wars

This drought-tolerant beauty.

Your thick skin  
around your core  
like faces cracked from the sun

Your white,  
astringent pulp,  
powers the Ayurveda system  
warding off disease.

Your seeds, purple like a sultan's robe.



Your bitterness  
is like the tongues of  
two nations fighting.

I consume you red bulb of fruit.

*Punica,*  
*Punica,*

You have bested thousands of  
sandstorms to crawl  
out of the Middle East  
to spread your creation  
around our vibrant  
storybook world.

## II

Ancient *Persia*:  
You give invincibility,  
And protect its core from me.

Ancient *Greece*:  
The Gods manipulate you,  
As I operate your insides.

Ancient *Egypt*:  
You're a symbol of ambition  
and prosperity that doesn't give me power.

*Punica,*  
*Punica,*

*China*:  
The emblem of fertility,  
making your seeds gratifying.

*Christianity*:  
You're forever-painted in time,  
and fade away off my table into the abyss.

## III

*Missoula, Montana*:  
You, Pomegranate  
has powers and exquisite textures

To land on my  
grandmother's kitchen table,  
for sacrifice,  
for smooth jelly.

But for me,  
I cut you,  
blend you  
to make you  
into jelly  
to eat on  
a piece of bread.

### ***A Chateau of Bums and Drags***

Like a wildflower the people here are  
hard-workers but show no improvement.  
The constant chatter, the defining noise  
It seems they come and go just like weeds.  
They don't die, or fade with the wind.  
They can be like flies – annoying,  
but more than you'd expect.

Everyday those who smoke,  
if its Motown girl, or Teresa up stairs, or Keegan,  
they burn out just like the street lights above our cars.  
Their lives like weeds and cigarettes give way to just  
puttering around showing little triumph or stability.  
Their SSI, Medi-Care and Financial Aid checks  
vanish between a snap of fingers.

## Aneesha Roy



Aneesha Roy is an avid reader and writer of poetry. She is currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in English. She is interested in literature, classical mythology, feminist criticism and philosophy. She currently lives in Kolkata, India.

### ***A Strange Confabulation***

I ponder heavily,  
My pen lies in  
Assiduous wait,  
Its nib protruding  
Like fangs unleashed.

Strenuous contemplation takes over.  
'I am master of myself', I thunder.  
Why then, does my slave-engineered brain  
Refuse to create?

Thoughts, ideas, impressions  
Lie nestled in somnolent slumber.  
Just visions loom large;  
Lurid, prophetic, grotesque.

I await a divine afflatus.

Why don't my literary foremothers  
Collude with me,  
Speak to me, from the turn of  
Centuries?

Weren't they too, cloistered  
And silenced into a life  
With no story?

But I do have a story.  
I want to say it out loud.  
Why then do my senses not obey?  
Do they perceive me incapable?  
I resolutely say,  
'Obey me pen! I command you.'

A hollow reverberation resonates.  
I stand riveted,  
My gaze arrested  
By a ghastly image.

She looks at me plainly,  
Dressed down demurely;  
An epitome of doe-like docility.  
But her eyes are aglow,  
Burning in infernal glory;  
Like a pair of torched houses  
Squealing in silent anguish.  
She stares at me through them,  
A giant conflagration –  
Mad, wild, deranged, desperate.

Thick wisps of dull grey hair  
Crown her pale, wrinkled flesh.  
Her furrowed brows  
Twitch irritably.

She bares her teeth,  
Rolls out her tongue  
From her misshapen mouth  
And struggles to render  
Coherence to disjointed utterings.

I hear closely for she says,  
'I too had a story.  
I too had a story.'

A gasp escapes my  
Parted lips as she  
Disappears into the  
Recesses of the shadows

That conjured her up.

### ***Gravitating Conundrums***

She linked her fingers to his,  
While walking down the  
Smoke-filled street.  
He let her clutch them,  
Bristling slightly, involuntarily.  
The lurid streetlights  
Glared askance at the  
Dark silhouettes  
Presenting an optical illusion,  
Appearing to merge into one.

They spoke tardily on the way.  
He dropped her off, at her  
Doorstep, amid unfinished  
Conversations, a few dozen  
Unspoken words.  
The refracted moonbeams  
Illuminated the slender  
Curve of her neck.  
He planted a patronizing kiss  
On her cheeks and left.

Sometimes these moments  
Were too exciting to get by –  
Moments quivering with  
Frenetic tension, colored with  
Redolent passion, moments  
Fraught with tender possibilities.

They walked beneath the squinting stars  
And voyeuristic streetlights.  
He whistled sometimes  
And flashed a wolfish grin.  
He called her a condescending polymath.

She basked in the warmth of  
His breath, caressing her face,  
When he spoke;  
Words borne on whirls of  
Engulfing cigarette smoke.

He talked of politics and law  
In an energetic, husky voice.

The animated tenor soothed her.  
Words were forgotten,  
Hardly ever attended to.  
They became instead a mellow,  
Sonorous tapestry,  
His rippling voice lapped at her  
Like waves around a  
Bereft, sequestered harbour.  
He watched unblinking,  
When she twirled her hair  
Away from her face with  
One sweeping, dismissive,  
Fluid motion.  
He watched when she strolled  
Languidly towards him,  
Betraying an air of  
Graceful torpor.

She rested her head on  
His square shoulders,  
When they sat side by side.  
He suppressed the thrill  
Of electric superfetation  
Of flesh on flesh.  
She laughed at him, when  
He flicked out his lighter  
With an impish swagger.  
He liked to call himself a  
Liberal interventionist.

They threw pebbles into the sea,  
When the sun went down in  
The sanguine blood-red horizon.  
They wagered who would throw  
It the farthest.  
She won most of the time.  
He attributed his defeat  
To his faulty evaluation  
Of trajectory.

They were comfortable.  
Perhaps, a tad too comfortable  
To change the order of things,

To knowingly rustle up a storm.  
 It was too pleasant and fulfilling  
 To risk suspending it all on  
 An impulse, to explore each  
 Other further.

It was a healthy arrangement.  
 It was how it should be.  
 Long walks, in and around campus,  
 Along the beach, the extended shoreline,  
 In fragrant parks and littered sidewalks  
 Alike, snatches of conversation, a  
 Disagreement or two, eating out  
 At bistros, a movie or two and  
 A shoulder to doze on.

Walking together, matching stride  
 For stride, interlocking fingers,  
 Brushing shoulders, repressing  
 Certain synapse-frying electrochemical  
 Signals, walking, meandering, strolling,  
 Perambulating as long as the strides led to  
 The selfsame destination;  
 And an amicable parting of ways,  
 At the crossroads,  
 When priorities change,  
 When ways diverge,  
 Never to converge again.

Long walks and lingering gazes,  
 Soft sighs and sweet nothings,  
 Peering through drawn curtains,  
 Stealing a glance or two.  
 This would do for now,  
 At least for this season.

## Basit Olatunji



Basit A. Olatunji was born in Ifon-osun, Osun State, Nigeria. He is a poet, an editor and an essayist. His first poetry collection, *Thoughtful Reflections*, was published in 2011. He is also working on his first play. He currently teaches English at State Senior High School, Agege, Lagos. He believes poetry is a freer of the mind and healer of the soul.

### *A Woman in Her Prime*

She knows the law  
But broke the love  
Into unfixable pieces  
With those mean words  
In the month of September  
In an ember temper  
I guess I vividly remember

I could feel it,  
The world was crumbling  
Crumbling and tumbling  
From the tallest height  
Different persons  
Different lessons  
Various seasons  
But same lame reasons

I remember, she said to me:  
You are the best man for my sex  
But her words turned out to be  
A vicious quest in its best  
A truthful lie in disguise



Then,  
I realised  
That a woman in her prime  
Has a liberty in crime

***A Lonely Man***

A lonely mind is an unruly land  
Where chaos does not take a bow

A lonely mind is an infertile land  
That falls fallow for a spruce plow

A lonely mind is a market of dodging ideas  
A season of reasoning  
A time of distillate

A lonely man is a madman  
Observing a lucid period  
In difficult period

A lonely man is an untamable storm  
His heart is a prison of thoughts  
His soul is possessed  
In the depth of endless fantasy

## Gabriel Bamgbose



Gabriel Bamgbose is a Nigerian writer and critic. He is currently teaching Literature in the Department of English, Tai Solarin University of Education, Nigeria. Also, he is an editor. He is widely published in different academic and literary journals, national and international. One of his poems is included in the longlist for the 2013 Ghana Poetry Prize.

### *I have no shoes*

That was what he told us  
That won our hearts  
And made us hail  
Here comes our *messiah*  
We thought he was like us  
He would be empathetic in our cause  
Because he had no shoes  
He gained our sympathy

But now that many shoes  
Are rivaling his two feet  
He keeps them all for himself  
The way one keeps useless concubines  
And here we are whimpering  
From the arch pains we incur –  
Our daily bread – from our leaking feet  
That has walked these craggy paths –  
Our Gethsemane – without shoes

Yea, I remember he has no shoes  
Now he has more than enough  
For him alone to wear  
Who cares now if we are without shoes!

***perhaps he thinks he will be president in heaven***

he bears his power on his head and shoulders with his authority he dictates the being of those beings that are living in his territory and decides where those who have died will lay their empty heads and worn-out bodies he knows his own and assigns them roles in his kingdom and the fate of the others he cares not about even when he journeys he goes with his regalia of reign and commands that he be armoured with the camouflage of power when he shall journey alone after his entourage amidst the blaring of sirens must have escort him to the port where he must fly alone perhaps he thinks will run another term having the Angels as his ministers and entourage perhaps he thinks he will be president in heaven

## David Schwartz



G. David Schwartz is the former president of Seedhouse, the online interfaith committee. Schwartz is the author of *A Jewish Appraisal of Dialogue* (1994) and *Midrash and Working Out Of The Book* (2004). Currently, he is a volunteer at The Cincinnati J, Meals On Wheels. His newest book, *Shards And Verse* (2011), is now in stores or can be ordered online.

### ***She Has Short Legs***

She has short legs  
 And she has big hips  
 She's got a decent nose  
 And she's got more than eight toes  
 She has tremendous lips  
 And still just a single nose  
 And I am not sure where it goes  
 She has a hundred teeth  
 And almost as many fingers  
 That's why when men look at her  
 Their stare still just lingers.

### ***I Read King Lear***

I read King Lear  
 A hundred times or more  
 When one say I just leered at him  
 Then fell down on the floor

## Ryan Johnson



Ryan Johnson is a recent college graduate who discovered his passion for writing back in 2008. He has recently relocated to Dayton Ohio from Atlanta Georgia where he continues to write in hopes of perfecting his craft.

### ***Unequal Equation***

Life is  
 Fleeting, failing, loving  
 In the hands of the maker  
 Given to the hands of the holder  
 Rushed, embraced, held like no other

On tomorrow's plaque  
 On yesterday's back burner  
 Changed, controlled, manipulated with consequence  
 Solved with no sum  
 Subtracted but not without addition

### ***Laid to Rest***

Steps to Heaven or hell

That's the only real decision we make in life  
 We make not life itself  
 The blame is laid across the busy city streets

The blame hangs proudly  
On the American flags we wave  
Placed in the mouths of preachers  
Who preach inconsistently in the pews  
On Sunday mornings packed with the hypocrites

Never forget the lies in the sheets of the bed  
We slept in last night and made this morning

## Kehinde Sofoluwe



Kehinde Sofoluwe is a poet, essayist and avid fan of drama with a penchant for political agitation. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Tai Solarin University of Education in 2010. His deliberate foray into literature, he believes, is a key to restoring a disrupted world order. He believes sternly in paying attention to the minute details of what connects us as humans.

### *The Key*

I am defied daily  
The room will not yield to me  
Do the storehouse not present,  
Present a key to turn  
The fulfilling knob of words?

I dream a god  
Yet I stand not yet as one

When pages demand a still  
The tap of revealed muse  
Need but wait

Finland's invention comes to rescue  
Such as thrust the key  
The knob goes as forged

Refreshment beckons  
For the faucet's come alive

Here comes the stare again . . .

When will I ever truly  
Ever truly own a key?



## Chandramohan S.



Chandramohan S. (b.1986) is an Indian English poet, short story writer and a social critique based in the south Indian state of Kerala. He is pursuing research in Mathematics, apart from being a translator, editor and a social activist. His writings reflect struggles of the marginalized people from all over the world.

### ***Sentenced to Freedom***

Chelsea's soul  
 incarcerated in a prison of "*Dont Ask Dont Tell*"  
 languishing in  
 the solitary confinement of  
 Bradley's body  
 locked up in uniform,  
 unlocks strings of ones and zeros in  
 an act of cyber mutiny,  
 eternal freedom redeemed in a mere 35 year sentence!

## Tope Omoniye



Professor Tope Omoniye is the Chair of Sociolinguistics in the Department of Media, Culture and Language, Roehampton University, in London. He is an accomplished scholar with numerous academic publications in sociolinguistics to his name. He is also a poet and the author of *Farting Presidents & Other Poems* (Kraft Books, 2001). His poems have also appeared in journals in Nigeria (*ANA Review*), Singapore (*AWARE*), Malaysia (*Tenggara & The Gombak Review*), USA (Quill Books and *Anthropology & Humanism*), UK (*The Unruly Sun*), seven Forward Press anthologies, and in Sweden (*Nordic African Institute Newsletter*), and *African Writing On-line*. In 1985, he won a runner-up prize in the National Anti-Apartheid Poetry Competition in Nigeria and in 2001 he received a honourable mention in the *Anthropology & Humanism* Annual Poetry Competition.

### Home

As the crow flies  
home these days  
is east of here my brother  
against the current of the westwind

for a while it was  
between the clouds and mountain tops  
where dreams came alive  
to re-ignite lost fire  
raise the phoenix from its ash

then for a moment  
it was everywhere and nowhere,  
just some place  
that promised a slice of toast,  
and a camp of sorts

but today  
home is down-under  
bearing east as I think of you  
in harmattan's *esiki*