



# DAWORO

**The Vienna African Writers (VAW)  
Quarterly Newsletter**

**Vol 5, Issue 3-4, December 2018**



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## Preface

The Vienna African Writers (VAW) Club, founded and chaired by Prof Adams Bodomo (Professor of African Languages and Literatures at the University of Vienna), will organize monthly meetings and quarterly African Poetry Slams (i.e. African poetry readings and competitions), along with other literary activities.

African writing is conceptualized here to be any form of writing or related form of literary arts that addresses and expresses African themes and conditions, and is spoken, written, or performed in African languages or in any other languages. These VAW activities will take place at various places in the city, including the Department of African Studies or other places at the University of Vienna and various African and general restaurants in the city.



## VAW Monthly Event

**18.10.2018**

*The first event in 2018 that was attended by 14 participants was chaired by Tomi Adeaga.*

The event was attended by 10 participants, and it was chaired by Tomi Adeaga.

It was a rich and fruitful meeting because we welcomed new members into our midst.

Everyone was invited to talk about their projects and poems. The contemporary Afro-Austrian visual artist, sculptor, graphic designer and curator, Solomon Okpukhure attended the event and introduced his website to us and talked about his work.

Afterwards, a lively discussion took place.

# Report on VAW Poetry Slam Event

**15.11.2018**

This event was attended by 28 participants and took place at the African Studies Department. The evening started with everyone introducing themselves to the audience. Tomi Adeaga moderated it and welcomed everyone who had come to take part in it. This was followed by a poetry slam competition. The judges of the poetry slam competition were: Mary Bodomo, Immanuel Harisch, and Anissa Strommer. The competitors were Anesu Dzvukeye, Nico Brunnbauer, Selina Rebhandl, and Laurène Southe. Anesu Dzvukeye won the first cash prize of 50 €; Selina Rebhandt came second and won 30 €, and Nico Brunnbauer came third and won 20 €.

Afterwards, as is the VAW tradition, members of the audience were invited to talk about their literary projects and other topics related to the African continent. More poems were read by Mfilinge Nyalusi and Beauty Mubanga. Charlotte Zerz introduced the UniVerse creative writing society and Trapez Literaturverein to the audience through video presentations. The conversation went on until the end of the program and beyond it. It was indeed quite a productive evening.





Ich bin schon öfter verloren gegangen. Und: Ich bin nicht selbstständig. Es ist mir nicht möglich, die Karotten alleine zu schälen. Den Abwasch zu machen, ohne elektronisches Wunderwerk dafür zu nutzen. Es ist diese absolute Gewissheit - dass die üblichen Verdächtigen nach mir suchen werden, alles daran setzen werden mich zu finden; es ist diese Gewissheit, weshalb ich mich dann überhaupt erst dazu entschieße, von der Bildfläche zu verschwinden. Also bin ich im Grunde genommen keine Last ... Ich bin so, wie ich bin, weil die anderen so sind, wie sie sind. Und wie sind sie? Sie sind... Sie sind... wahrlich selbstständig. Haben einen Kalender am Schreibtisch stehen und gehen immer um die gleiche Zeit ins Bett, während ich nicht anders kann als dagegen zu rebellieren. Ich muss rastlos sein. Ich kann nicht, ich muss! Naja, irgendjemand sollte sich doch dafür zuständig fühlen, über diese Straßen zu wachen, während der Rest der Welt schläft! Der Rest meiner Welt zumindest. Um drei

Uhr morgens antwortet mir dann ja doch niemand auf meine Nachrichten. Die wichtigen Nachrichten: "Kann man einen Topfenkuchen auch mit Cottage-Cheese machen? Wie oft sollte man sich in der Woche die Fingernägel schneiden? Sollte ich meinen nächsten Urlaub im Bermuda-Dreieck buchen? Drei Cent hin, Drei Cent zurück. Billiger wird's sicher nimmer!" Ach, wenn da nur jemand neben mir liegen könnte ... Dann hätte ich sicher keine Angst davor im Schlaf an einem Herzinfarkt zu krepieren. Dann hätte ich keinen Grund mehr, verloren gehen zu müssen. Dann hätte mich jemand nämlich gefunden. Mich! Mich unselbstständige Person! Aber macht mich das 'selbstständiger'? Also so richtig 'selbstständig' Selbstständig? Kicher, kicher! Ich denke nicht. Aber das LOST & FOUND braucht dann niemand mehr zu kümmern ... darum braucht sich absolut niemand mehr zu scheren ... niemand außer diesem armen Schwein, das mich für immer und für ewig ... gefunden hat.



Pflanzen sind die besseren Menschen. Ja, sie sind die besseren Menschen, denn ihre Wurzeln kann man wenigstens sehen. Ganz eindeutig. Wurzelig und völlig geerdet. Dieser Hunger ist schon da - immer größer und größer zu werden mein' ich, aber eine Pflanze muss keine andere Pflanze töten ... alles nur um dann weiter zu florieren. Schneller zu wachsen als eigentlich vorgesehen. Zumindest, soweit ich weiß. Aber was weiß ich schon? Was ist schon 'besser'? Eine Pflanze ist eine Pflanze. Und ein Mensch ein Mensch. Ich bin ein Mensch. Schon irgendwie ironisch, dass man sich das nicht aussuchen kann, oder? Meine Wurzeln sind irgendwo und irgendwas und irgendwer - eindeutig zuordnen werde ich das wohl nie können ... obwohl ich das so gerne wollen würde! Und das, ohne dabei ein ganzes Leben lang damit zu verschwenden, die Buchstaben in der Buchstabensuppe herauszufischen und sie dem Alphabet entsprechend zu sortieren. Nur weil meine Haut weiß oder schwarz ist, so



könnte ich doch auch grau sein, unter dem Panzer, der meine Venen und mein Fleisch geschickt bedeckt, nicht? Muss ich entweder das 'eine' oder das 'andere' sein? Klar muss ich das. Denn ich bin ein Mensch. Und ein Mensch kann erst dann beruhigt schlafen gehen, wenn er weiß, dass die Tulpen Tulpen sind und die Lilien Lilien. Was stünde mir wohl im Wege, in meinem nächsten Leben ein Fichtenbaum zu werden? Nichts. Auf den ersten Gedanken - gar nichts. Aber bringt mich das dann meinen Wurzeln wirklich näher? Setze ich da fort, wo ich aufgehört habe, oder besinnt mich die Existenz zu ihrem Ursprung zurück? Frag doch den langlebigen Kiefer in Kalifornien mal danach. Halte dein Ohr an seinen Stamm und höre hin. Hör ganz genau hin! Da sind sie, die Wurzeln!



Look,

You've got me doing what you want  
from nine to five,  
You've got me thinking if I'm really  
doing all of this just to survive  
Because you've got me at the back-  
seat of an eternal drive,  
Yeah, you've got a negro inside  
feeling more dead than even alive-

And for all the brothers and sisters  
still tearing, sharing the pain,  
Still bearing to be caring those  
non-visible slavery chains  
For the neck,  
for the hands,  
for the feet leaving bloodstains,  
Left in such critical conditions that  
it's fucking up your brains.

No!

I don't want it to be overboard, half  
full, let the glass be empty.  
What you call them?

Bitches, hoes, niggas, we've got plenty  
Of them in different sizes,  
different places, age over twenty  
And as you enjoy it best,  
With a bullet through the chest,  
As the recent advert express  
Let them guess, they might receive  
freedom if they pop a Pepsi.

Dusty cover but since the history book  
is open, I might focus  
More on the tragedies of the story,  
maybe what was the motive  
Behind the curtains,  
behind the scenes,  
before fallen roses  
On the same ground they were led  
across the red sea by Moses.

Drowning in my tears,  
when are going to let a negro breath?  
Trapped in the clouds of weed,  
troubled,  
will you even let a negro succeed?  
Unnecessary struggle got us weak on  
bottles,  
aren't you even worried?  
I walk on the streets undercover  
Hanging in corners,  
Even though I know of my ancestors  
hanging on trees



Yeah it's true, I hate family reunion  
When we argue, It's the only time we  
speak in union

When my state of mind is weak  
My best excuse? "I'm only human"  
and when I'm strong and meek, 'Well,  
I'm a woman' -

And when a friend dies, my first  
thought was 'where was I to prevent  
it?'

Where was the dedication like white  
folks stating "Negro" like they speak  
Spanish

I'm triggered.

What's the point of being alive if you  
can't even save lives? I figured.  
Woke up and I just realized that pain is  
part of life and happiness is all lies  
Since I was a child, I had to go through  
dark times

For love, I had to commit the worst  
crimes, now my heart is injured.

Now MY heart is injured!  
Was it suicide when you inhaled that  
white line and crossed God's speed  
limit?

Did you really mean to die or was it just  
to lift up the spirit?

I guess only time can tell the difference  
I guess only time can tell the difference

I guess because pain is part of life  
Death, you're forgiven...



oh, brother mine  
dear little big brother  
wake up  
hear my cry

don't make my mistakes  
for lack of better knowledge  
don't force me to see you fall  
I'm right here

be the better person  
you may stumble  
never fall  
I can't bear to see you shatter

don't go over my cliff  
let me be a pillar  
supporting your bridge  
and the road you travel

make your own mistakes  
don't let the system  
destroy you again  
like it did me

I'm begging you  
listen to a sister's plea  
I can't bear to see you crumble  
don't make the same mistakes as me



is this supposed to be it  
everything  
we went through together  
gone

simply vanished into thin air  
fading away  
breaking apart piece by piece  
ending in a void

no last words  
no final fight  
just a hollow emptiness  
where you – we – once were

how could we let this happen  
after all that we've been through  
all the pain and tears and heartache  
we shared

all the happy days  
the laughter and walks in the sun  
the codes and whispers and secret mes-  
sages  
on all the notebook pages we passed

the silent conversations  
the single looks and hugs and smiles  
that said  
“what the heck” or  
“I’m here” or  
“I’m happy we’re sharing this”

all of a sudden  
it is gone  
and I’m wondering  
do you feel this bleeding hole as much  
as I do?

are you hurting as much as me?  
do you ever think back  
and wonder  
how it could get so far

‘cause I lost my soul sister  
and don’t know how to get her back  
how to repair all the wounds  
how to bridge this tear-filled silence

we once had a bond  
do you still feel it?  
do you even miss me  
or are you just over it?

because I’m not  
I don’t think I can be  
cause I lost my sister  
and I want her back

I want the laughter  
and the shared pain  
the tears and the gossip  
and everything else

I need my sister –  
don’t you need me?

I know we both hurt and made mis-  
takes  
kept secrets and didn’t care  
but what would I give  
for one last afternoon at our favourite  
coffeeshop  
for one last night gossiping over our  
wine  
for one last jam session  
and one last cry  
together

cause I lost my sister  
and she lost me

we lost us

and now there’s only empty space in  
my heart  
where we once were  
and it pains me more than I can say

I want my sister back  
I need her in my life  
and I want to tell you all these things

it’s eating me alive

but what  
if after all this time  
you don’t want me back  
anymore



To the man who asked me if my rapist  
misunderstood

When you ask me if he misunderstood,  
No he didn't,  
He just assumed non consensual sex was  
how most visits with acquaintances were  
meant to go,  
And I of course said nothing and swim-  
mingly went with the flow.

I assume with your question you're also  
implying  
That somehow I was "asking for it"  
That I left my morality at his dorm door  
And now in a morbid attempt to restore  
my dignity I've resorted to lying

And I say stop  
I have already had one man shove his fist  
into my stomach  
And slowly siphon off my insides, gutting  
me like a fish,  
I do not wish for another to dissect what  
was left behind.

You have no idea how many times I've  
tread those waters,  
Images of that evening running through  
my head in an infinite loop,  
Asking myself if he had simply misunder-

stood

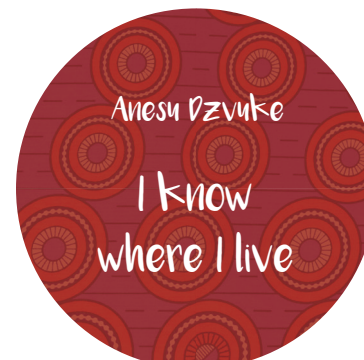
But when I remember how he locked that door  
behind him and looked at my skin,  
Like a fisherman studying the scales of a catch he  
is dying to pin to the walls of his cabin,  
I know he did not misunderstand.  
Moments like these transcend spoken language  
Like the nagging need stemming from the nodes  
in your brain;  
For you to blame the wounded bass that bathed  
the sea in its blood.

So that when the shark descends upon it,  
It's easy for you to shake your head and mutter  
"I would not let that happen to me".

And so you minimize what he has done,  
And marginalize, criticize and scrutinize my  
actions  
Because that way you don't have to deal with the  
realization that we're all painfully vulnerable,  
And bad things just like forest fires aren't always  
preventable

You could travel for miles across seas and na-  
tions  
And nearly every single human you encounter  
would understand  
The meaning of a smile,  
The pain that likes to linger in silence,  
The loss in tears,  
And the hate and desperation that makes itself  
heard through acts of violence  
And if he had to resort to violence,  
To instill silence and fear in me he did not mis-  
understand.

Yes, there are things that transcend spoken  
language  
But consent isn't one of them.



Apparently... at least according to the  
Internet,  
Asian men and Black women were found  
to be the least desirable minorities on  
dating apps,  
And as a black woman I think to myself,  
Says who?  
A Tinder Study? The already problematic,  
low key misogynistic fashion industry?  
Child, I could care less about the negativity  
and buzz in the background.  
I know you ain't talking about me!  
I am sexy.  
On a good day, like on a good good day  
I could give you a run for your money  
honey.

I ain't no size four, but my hair a 4c  
And that's basically the same thing.  
And when this chocolate skin glowing, and  
my hair all neat,  
And I lace up my heels,  
And start strutting down that street,  
Ain't nobody finna tell me nothing.  
And I ain't looking left, I ain't looking  
right.  
I'm looking straight ahead like I got an

army of sweaty warriors behind me,  
And occasionally I look left at the shop  
windows.  
But I ain't looking for no electronics, I  
ain't looking for no clothes.  
I ain't looking at no merchandise.  
I'm gazing at my doggone self in that  
reflection and thinking,  
Damn girl, them legs be nice.  
And I know I'm having a good day cause  
Jerome looking at me like an alcoholic  
looks at a whisky neat.  
But I'm busy on some Gladys Knight trip  
tonight,  
and baby I'm the best thing that ever  
happened to me.  
So who cares if ain't nobody tryna take  
me home?  
shiiiiiii  
I'll take myself home,  
I know where I live.



When you tell me that „12 years a slave“ is your favourite movie  
 I feel the walls of your mini condo  
 dissolve and the vastness of 12 different  
 galaxies between us  
 You blurt out “im so happy those terrible  
 times are over” as you bat eyes  
 soaked in salt and cloudy water  
 whilst a small sad smile ripples across  
 your face like a ship parting waves in  
 the Atlantic  
 and I hold my tongue captive between  
 my teeth and turn away  
 least the words that escape my lips  
 will make me sound jaded  
 cause for me the movie is not over  
 I do not need to view four slave movies  
 in a row,  
 to see brown bodies broken into  
 and robbed of basic human dignity  
 by brutes  
 that then had the audacity to straighten  
 their collars  
 after they did those deeds and call  
 themselves superior  
 nor do I need to see my people tied to  
 the back of a truck

and dragged down a rocky road leaving behind  
 a sea of scarlet and shattered homes  
 because the only crime they dared commit  
 was being born in skin  
 that was the equivalent of a full body bulls  
 eye target  
 I don't need to lull myself into a false sense  
 of security by believing that this travesty  
 was an isolated crime  
 for you a horrible event frozen in the  
 archives of history, for me an ongoing disaster  
 that is not over  
 not even when I press pause on the remote  
 control  
 because the pain for me does not fade  
 when that screen fades to black  
 Unlike you I cannot view the present with  
 the precious rose colored glasses you possess  
 the pair that I own, the ones that were  
 fashioned for and handed down to me are  
 “the colour purple”



There is a big difference between life  
 and the life we living/  
 Be the whole hidden sense within  
 concepts joining lives or the life we  
 feeling/  
 Each step we take in life is a definition  
 of our feelings/  
 Feelings of those images and colours  
 we saw while dreaming.

Feeling of freedom/  
 Feeling of happiness/  
 Strong like roman coliseum/  
 Feeling of love affection and tenderness.

Colours of satisfaction/  
 Colours of presence/  
 Colours of a clear defined direction/  
 Colours of harmony and respected co  
 existence.

Regardless all the curves or a rough road  
 ahead/  
 The meaning of life remains the ability to  
 live/  
 Ability to get at least food and a comfort  
 bed/  
 Ability to earn a reward out of your strive.

Being able to connect yourself to your  
 environment and adopt.  
 The ability to stay focused and stay away  
 from concepts of mislead/  
 Then looking forward for the chance to  
 make it up for all the things which had  
 been lost/  
 Even though it might be hard, hard in  
 deed.

Look at us dogs living in two different  
 towns/  
 Day inn day out, still we cannot feel our  
 fully controlled fate/  
 Our muzzle so tight, we can bark but never  
 take a bite/  
 Dog leash chocks us slowly we will soon  
 die from hate.

Are you happy with your life?  
 Are you free to live your life?  
 Are you satisfied with your life?  
 Are you comfortable to tell the story of  
 your life?



A river of blood is running down the  
sink  
Soon enough, the river of blood will  
run out like blue ink

God, what is it for?  
I pleaded.

I haven't got a soul,

I'm the colour of petrol and my big lips  
are pink

I'm the missing nose of the Sphinx

I'm the missing clothes on Sarah Baart-  
man's skin

I wasn't told but, my great great  
grand-father was a king  
Until they chopped his right arm  
And sold it on the market like bread &  
milk

To think they would spare the lives of  
the children younger than six  
Oh, you think?!

That's how a religion started to be needed  
That's how they built their nations and  
chose their leaders  
Stop beating you with a stick until you  
were beaten  
Left bleeding  
While missionaries hoped that their sto-  
ries will touch the readers  
We were ready to kill one another if some  
were non-believers

I am from what is known today as Congo  
but my tribe is anonymous  
The first time I went there,  
They told me the sand was red because  
the killings were numerous

And if you feel like after reading this you  
don't belong in this universe  
That makes the two of us  
And I know love seems to be a blessing  
but truly, it is a curse  
And I know the truth hurts but, confusion  
is worse

We're living behind a blinded system  
Where children are dying to scream out  
golden opinions  
Where they hear you out but only few  
ever listen  
How long will the truth stay hidden?

It could have been YOU and YOU or  
YOU

Lying on the warm floor

Politicians pretending like they knew  
nothing at all

When will the rain start to fall?

Wash them off the floor

Only the blood will remain to stick a little  
bit more...

After a long period of time,  
Dry blood spread like a painted piece of  
the great War  
Blood from your children, from your  
brothers and sisters  
From your mothers, your fathers, from  
your cousins  
From your loved ones, from your uncles,  
from your aunties  
And from many more

Their blood soon one with the sand on  
the floor

# How to submit your work!

## Daworo Guidelines

Daworo is a quarterly newsletter usually distributed in print at the Grand Poetry Slam event organized by the Vienna African Writers Club.

### Deadlines:

We take submissions up to 10 days after each literary event. Please take note of our event schedules by liking our Facebook page or by signing up to the mailing list.

### Electronic Submission:

Submissions should be emailed to Dr Tomi Adeaga  
tomi.adeaga@univie.ac.at  
Department of African Studies  
University of Vienna

Please label your email in the subject line as 'Daworo Submission' with your name and type. (E.g. Daworo Submission – Type – First Name, Last Name)

### Physical Submission:

If you attend a literary event or perform at a Grand Poetry Slam, and have an announcement, it will be noted down along with your contact information. If you submit a hard copy of your writing or poetry, you will still need to submit an electronic copy before the deadline.

### Number of Submissions:

You may submit as many items as you wish.

### Types of Work Accepted:

Poetry, VAW-member announcements, event announcements, literary contribu-

tions (i.e. book reviews, book launches and book readings). Photographs of our events are also accepted.

### Types of Work Rejected:

Commercial Advertisement, Announcements unrelated to African literary arts, Organizational announcements not in partnership with VAW.

### Content Standards:

All submissions must be your original work and should be related to African literary arts. African writing is conceptualized as any form of writing that addresses and expresses African themes and conditions in African languages or in any other languages. Work by Africans and non-Africans are welcome. We also appreciate photographs in high quality.

### Editing:

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# Editorial

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Assistant Editor  
Assistant Editor  
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Graphic Designer

