

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 Okpurokhre 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 Bodomu, Immanuel Harisch, and Anissa Strommer. The competitors were Anesu Dzvuke, Nico Brunnbauer, Selina Rebhandl, and Laurène Southe. Anesu Dzvuke 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 entschließe, 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

POETRY
CORNER

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

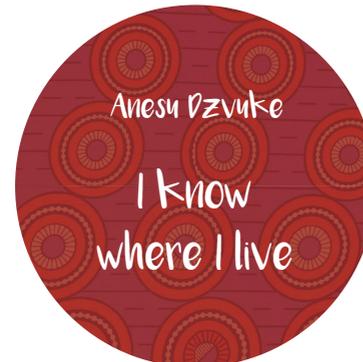
But when I remember how he locked that door
behind him and looked at my skin,
Like a fisherman studying the scales of a catch he
is dying to pin to the walls of his cabin,
I know he did not misunderstand.
Moments like these transcend spoken language
Like the nagging need stemming from the nodes
in your 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 differ-
 ent galaxies between us
 You blurt out “im so happy those ter-
 rible 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 be-
 tween 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 mov-
 ies in a row,
 to see brown bodies broken into
 and robbed of basic human dignity
 by brutes
 that then had the audacity to straight-
 en 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 be-
 hind 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 ar-
 chives of history, for me an ongoing disas-
 ter 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 pos-
 sess
 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 defini-
 tion 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 tender-
 ness.

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 en-
 vironment 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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