

THE YOUNG AFRICAN POETS ANTHOLOGY

THE FIRE  
THAT IS  
DREAMED  
OF

GUEST-EDITED BY  
I.S. JONES & NOME  
EMEKA PATRICK

CURATED BY ERNEST O. ÒGÚNYEMÍ

The Fire That Is Dreamed of:  
*The Young African Poets Anthology*

*GUEST EDITED BY*

**I.S. JONES and NOME PATRICK EMEKA**

*CURATED BY*

**Ernest O. Ògúnymí**

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Cover Designed by Ernest O. Ògúnymí.

“Rays, violet and short, piercing the gloom,

foreshadow the fire that is dreamed of.”—Christopher Okigbo, *The Passage*.

“This anthology highlights the breadth and possibility of poetry in exciting and inspiring ways. A conversational collection that deals with big ideas in divergent ways.”

—Ojo Taiye, winner of the 2019 Brittle Paper Award for Poetry & author, *All of Us Are Birds & Some of Us Have Broken Wings*.

“Too often, we have heard it said of young poets, their impatience is only surpassed by their unskilfulness. This anthology is a rebuttal, a quieting of such widespread condescension. Here are poems that throb with the urgency of spells, young poets with an uncanny mastery of language. Far from rust, these voices (as long as they keep putting in the work) will dazzle readers unendingly, in the years to come.”

—Pamilerin Jacob, author, *Gospels of Depression*.

# Contents

## 5- Introduction

## 8- WHY WE NEED TO CREATE SPACES FOR YOUNG AFRICAN POETS (WRITERS)

11- Figurines

13- I Imagine Grandmother Reading for the Second Time

14- night is dead here

15- I Keep My Cracks Close to the Hearth

16- When it Comes to Men

18- The Rain

19- the unbinging

20- ennui,

21- mouths

23- Faisal

24- Seroconversion: A Matter of Silence

25- If Picasso was a poet

26- The Thing About Love

27- IN MY DEFENCE I DOWNLOADED

TINDER BECAUSE

29- To Offin-ile (the place that smelled like rain, wet plants  
and burning trash)

30- The Leaves that fell on Easter morn

31- Chef's Kiss

33- Cancer

34- Dusk

35- CONTRIBUTORS' BIO

Animashaun A. Ameen

Juliet Lubwama

Adeyele Adeniran

Enotor Prosper

Titilope Odeyinka

Adamu Usman Garko

Ernest O. Ògúnnyemí

Korede Kakaaki

Orjichukwu Golding

Lyambee Aorabee

Lyambee Aorabee

Eze Kenechukwu

Al-Ameen Babawale

Donell Williams

Adeyele Adeniran

Obasa Funmilayo

Omotoyosi Salami

Success Agbenu

Fiyinfoluwa Timothy Oladipo

# INTRODUCTION

We who are living now have an obligation to open the future's doors and make space for the next generation of creators, thinkers, and dreamers. Right now the world is in chaos, and in a time like this, a miracle as small as a poem is what keeps us endlessly possible. When Ernest Ògúnyemí approached us to co-edit this anthology, we were grateful for his ability to look so far into the future by looking at the writers who are watching the world move now. Those who may have yet to call themselves 'writers' but who spend their *now* patiently observing life as it passes through them and have found that they must turn to written language to make sense of living.

When we set out to make our selections for the anthology, we were marveled by the gifts glistening in each poem. For us, the future of African Letters became clearer, perhaps than it has ever been. The tomorrow of African poetics—the one we've always allocated to new generations until those new generations become of the past—is right here: the voices of legends reincarnated—styles, forms, narrative strengths, and communal responsibility to document the politics of reality—garmented in vigor and artistic glory. From sexuality, duty, familial dynamics, war, love, reclamation, to music and more, the young people here are vulnerable, courageous, and unflinching in their approach to the lived circumstances that are pressing on their generation. The voices that are gathered here are precise—each poet's ability to carry the canto of their own memories and histories—full of energy, light and desire.

We're thinking of the anthology's opening poem, 'Figurines' by Animashaun A. Ameen:

I was fourteen when my mother  
carved the name of God on my chest  
for kissing another boy.  
She held a match in her left hand;  
abominations are meant to burn to ashes.  
I wanted to hold her face to the sky  
and remind her love is like water:  
formless  
fearless

but all I did was lay there  
and bleed out the virus in my veins

These voices, young and full of promises, are the ones we've been anticipating, and now that they are in a single assemblage, we can't help but acknowledge not just their beauties, but also their sheer brilliance. Certainly, the word 'future' extends beyond just its nominal nature—though it is a mirror into the *yet-to-happen*, parts of it. 'Future' as a continuous shift towards uncertainty but also towards hope. If critical scrutiny is paid toward 'future' in this context, we realize it also means accessibility. Carl Philips speaks so well of this in his book *The Art of Daring*. “*Accessibility* means that a thing should be immediately available to us via the *usual means*,” Carl wrote. The potency of the word 'available', as used in Carl's assertion, is appropriate for the presence of these voices: they are here, they are with us, and we see them completely.

The both of us being Nigerian—I (Itiola) a diaspora-born Nigerian, and I (Nome) having grown up on the continent—while selecting the poems for the anthology, we were deliberate in choosing an eclectic array of African voices spread out across the continent and the diaspora, as no one region can ever fully represent what African Letters means. The continent is far too vast with both rich and complicated histories for this anthology to fully encapsulate the African experience, but these poems acknowledge some of what is often associated with the continent—one of them being war and strife. As Obasa Funmilayo confronts with elegance and dexterity in “The leaves that fell on Easter morn’:

a girl prances around the  
pillars as a sermon slips  
into the heart of the  
congregation.

an autumn breeze cascades  
its leaves in spring, a  
sea is set ablaze.

a church has been called  
by the sound of bombs:  
the sermon lingers in  
the air like smoke.

But these poems also address the complicated nature of love, as shown in Babawale Al-Ameen's poem, 'The Thing About Love':

It's simple:

everything that sweetens can  
also make our lives bitter, and  
love, whatever else it is, is no exception.

T.S. Eliot in his essay "Tradition and The Individual Talent" wrote, "No poet, no artist, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists." To write with such veracity and candor at such a young age, to us, is a marker of longevity. To that end, this anthology is a collection of vastness of the African voice, the limitlessness of the African narrative, and a ceremonial passing of the torch. May we, the readers of these works, nurture the seeds of their curiosity.

**I.S. Jones and Nome Patrick Emeka,**

***Guest Editors***



## WHY WE NEED TO CREATE SPACES *FOR* YOUNG AFRICAN POETS (WRITERS)

More than ever, ours is a time when, it seems, poetry is everywhere. A lot of people are writing it, more people are buying it, a lot more people are reading and sharing it. And this is happening all over the world. It is also a time when African poetry is enjoying a kind of glorious resurrection; as Ebenezer Agu wrote in *20.35 I*: “Contemporary African poetry is not yet where it needs to be, but everything that is happening now—the various institutions that are working for the growth of poetry from young Africans—shows an uplifting from a former place of comatose.”

However, when the phrase ‘young Africans’ is used, most times it does not include the teenagers dying at the corner of their rooms to have the words they’re putting to the page read. The *20.35 Anthology* for example accepts works from poets between the ages of 20 and 35, which means that the poets below the minimum age are left out. The same goes for most magazines that are out there to publish works from writers from everywhere in the world, and even for ‘African’ magazines: the majority of works published by these magazines are works by the *20.35* kind of ‘young Africans’. Same goes for the literary prizes.

The problem is not that the ‘young poets’ (in this context, teen African poets) are left out of platforms that were specifically created *not* for them; but that there are almost no platforms created specifically *for* them. In the west, there are a whole lot of literary magazines that publish *just* teen poets, or high-schoolers. There is Polyphony Lit (which also awards prizes to the best pieces published in the magazine every year, the Ann Seaman Award), Canvas Lit Journal, Ricochet Review, the Daphne Review, Teen Vogue—and Adroit, while not specifically a teen journal, has programs designed for young writers. Also, there are mentorship programs, workshops, and awards, countless number of them; only a few are open to young African writers.

One of them is the Foyle Young Poets Award, the biggest poetry award for teen poets worldwide. In 2018, Fiyinfoluwa Oladipo—a friend who worked with me on this project and whose work is also included here—was one of the hundred commended poets, selected from about 6000 poets from around the world. In 2019, Ifeoluwa Olatona, also a friend, was one of the hundred commended poets out of over 9000 poets. In 2019, Fiyinfoluwa and I were selected for the Adroit Summer Mentorship Program, which was a wonderful, wonderful experience. The two of us were the only Africans (Nigerians) in the class that year. I have had poems in a few of the teen journals of the west: Canvas, Summer 2019; Ricochet Review, Volume 7; and Polyphony Lit Mag. But each time I have appeared in any of these journals, I have been the only one—by *the only one* I mean the only Nigerian and African. In the previous issue before the summer issue of Canvas in which I appeared, there was another poet, who was *the only one*.

While those are success stories—yeah, they are—the struggle is real. When Ife got commended, I had a friend who was going to cry because he wasn't commended, and all over the continent there must have been plenty young poets who were heartbroken because a dream crashed. There were rejections before those magazines decided to take a chance on me. There are even more rejections for plenty of us 'young poets', because, in the absence of spaces for us, we try our luck at spaces that we're not yet ready to take. Are there any platforms on the African continent that do what Adroit does for teen writers? Maybe a few, one or two. I know of SprinNG. How do we take the spaces when we are not ready, when there are no spaces to *get us ready*? Yeah, a few other teen African poets will get into Adroit's Mentorship Program; what about the plenty who won't? They sit in the corners of their rooms and cry—like I used to—and they keep writing things that have heart but is “just not good enough” because they don't know how to make it good enough.

Here is the thing: We need to create spaces for 'young poets' to learn, and other spaces to test whatever they have learned. Gratefully, a number of us have learned a little, some have learned it by reading, and some by mentorship programs, and they are burning to have the world hear what they have to say, and how beautifully and powerfully they can say it. This anthology is a space for a few of us to say what we have to say, and in our own way. The poems here are poems by young poets who are just learning to walk: We are not perfect, and our poems are not perfect either, but they are raw and fresh, like just plucked vegetables from a garden just bathed in rain. Be gentle when reading these poems, don't look for perfection; only “open your ears”, like Romeo Oriogun wrote in his poem 'maps', and dance.

This anthology, I believe, is just one of many spaces that will come forth all over the continent to publish teen African poets/ writers. However, even this would never have been possible without some gorgeous people. Thanks to I.S. Jones and Nome Emeka Patrick, both of whom I'll forever adore, who decided to read our imperfect poems and help shape them till they began to look beautiful. Thank you. To Otosirieze Obi-Young at Brittle Paper, you are such an inspiration, especially to those of us who are coming behind. Thank you for pushing me to make the best decisions for the anthology, and for more. Thank you to Fiyinfoluwa Oladipo, with whom I first talked about this, who was filled with light at the thought of it, and who read submissions with me; I cherish you, bro. Also, to the team at Agbowó for picking this up, I can't thank you enough. To every poet who submitted, the world is not ready for what we are coming with, please keep writing those poems. To the contributors herein, I respect and admire you. And to the reader, may you find something here that will make you smile or shed a tear, or dance, or—gasp.

**Ernest O. Ògúnymí,**

*Curator.*

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## Figurines

*Animashaun A. Ameen*

I was fourteen when my mother  
carved the name of God on my chest  
for kissing another boy.  
She held a match in her left hand;  
abominations are meant to burn to ashes.  
I wanted to hold her face to the sky  
and remind her love is like water:  
formless  
fearless  
but all I did was lay there  
and bleed out the virus in my veins.

Outside somewhere,  
there is a girl filling her body with saltwater  
hoping it would guide her  
to the gates of heaven.  
I do not know what her story is.  
Somewhere else,  
a boy is carving his shadow  
to resemble his father  
because he is too scared to  
make a home out of his own truths.

I see my mother waiting  
on a stool with her knife  
every time I visit another boy's body.  
And each time before I run,  
I scream:

“Mother, I do not know  
how to not be this way.”

## I Imagine Grandmother Reading for the Second Time

*Juliet Lubwama*

She stares at words so long, she witnesses

an unbecoming, where *H's* are railroad tracks and *I's*  
are the wide-roofed stations. *I am my own station,*

she says. Ink unfurls from yellow page

like grain, and grandmother proclaims  
*seventy-eight cents.* Then she says invaluable,

intractable. Fatherless hands

invade her arms, her legs. They press into  
her chest like a slot machine, *twenty-five cents.*

Her fingers press a page the way she reaches

for her mother when they take her. Her skin is washed  
and wrinkled with a yearning, inconsolable, her palms upturned

in blessing. In her will, I inherit everything

but her tongue. A clunking train passes by my desk  
and she is gone. A brown coin spinning into epitaph.

## night is dead here

*Adeyele Adeniran*

the night beckons  
promising as always the lucid  
sounds of generators rumbling  
the dead color of NEPA's inadequacies  
food sprouting  
in the most unlikely corners of the street  
love in dark rooms and unlit motor parks  
rough sex in hot places  
dancing bodies exploring liberation  
some poor and asleep  
some awake and on shift  
the bridge is alive,  
horns and tires creating an abomination  
to the peace of midnight—  
people dreaming of enemies,  
riches, *maga*, tomorrow, love and wishes.  
it's sad that a city is breeding  
a people in desperation  
trying to catch what their hands  
cannot reach  
learning to live for today  
tomorrow will settle itself  
dreams live to die here—  
it happens every night.

## **I Keep My Cracks Close to the Hearth**

*Enotor Prosper*

In a room, a fan mutters, grieves out wind not thick enough to push back the water on my skin. The door yawns to a peep, stretching itself in a bid to pull me out. There's something about tonight's dark, the way it longs for tomorrow. Boy, hold your grief, don't let it rumble down the lowlands of your tongue. The world is pained enough. Boy, since when did you get to unbottle loss with a bottle of whiskey? Boy laughing, the rattling of bones. Boy holding his life inches away from a cliff. Boy, it's not graffiti if you misspell your name to a wall. Boy, what is it about your face that turns into a plea stretched by a neck? Don't let them know you are falling. You are not rain. On nights like this, bend double, fold into yourself; say clouds are the teeth of the sky. The wind, a congregational prayer for too many trees. Father's cigarette, a wand: puffs of silhouette, dreams, hopes. In the night, a boy weaving loss into skin.



## When it Comes to Men

*Titilope Odeyinka*

i.

My aunt's waist beads make *seke seke* sounds  
as she walks, swaying her hips  
You can hear them if you are next to her.  
She says they give her power over men  
Power to make the neighbour's husband hers  
Till she burns her name into his memory  
only releasing him when she is sure  
every part of him smells like her

ii.

My grandma says all men are the same.  
She says this while stirring the pot and kisses her teeth;  
“They are all shit and want your loving and babying  
Why waste all your energy  
on a man if he don't have any money?  
Poor men don't deserve to be loved.”  
She kisses her teeth again

iii.

Mother swears the only way to keep a man is to serve him.  
“Make him the god you can see  
If your husband says go, who are you to say come?”  
And even after kneeling and groveling,  
he might leave you one day, take all his money with him  
to a woman with bigger titties and a smaller waist  
And even after that child, you must pray  
Like she does on her knees every night for my father  
to come back to his family.

Sometimes, the words become rocks  
in her throat and she breaks  
into a sea midsentence.

## **The Rain**

*Adamu Usman Garko*

It is cloudy

Soon the rain will fall upon

The drenched heart

It will sing its song

Enter into forgotten places

And become a pool

When it goes

When the earth opens

To receive the rainwater

The memory of you

Won't be buried still,

It will become a haunting ghost.

## **the unhinging**

*Ernest O. Ògúnnyemi*

a Song Thrush flies out of my hand but forgets its beaks  
in my palm—every hole in my body is growing a voice—  
my body is a choir of voices singing an elegy—I miss  
my ex—the heart is a bad collector, it will keep all  
that we choose to bury—to survive is to always remember  
—my mother’s ghost makes home in my body—the dead  
live on inside us—every bud inside me is experiencing  
a retrogress of the Lazarus effect—my wings are losing  
faith—there’s something funny about heartbreaks—  
all tragedies make for laughter, too, it all depends on  
who speaks—god still mourns his son—there’s something  
about loss that unhinges us, makes us beautiful stories  
worn inside out.

**ennui,**

*Korede Kakaaki*

your eyes are a mouthful of songs

& the fragile lyrics are dark seas,

& i keep falling into uncharted waters

my fingers raise to the cascading music

in your throat, your eyes—rivulet with a broken source

your body—a livid tale living in yesterdays,

echoes from the past of nightmares

held in the lines of your father's palm

you look broken, like stale dream,

like one undone by the keen knife of life

like a refugee from a shipwreck, like pebbles thrown

along the shore of fate

you said death is a sheltering tree

& burn your body into incense of memories

& like desert dunes, you let the wind blow you

away

## **mouths**

*Orjichukwu Golding*

they say caught wings  
learn to fight battles,  
in places like Libya where birds  
attempt to fly without perching.  
to see places  
is to tie hope round the waist,  
to float like a freed kite  
when storm roams overhead.  
rainfall drenches skins with holes,  
the dermis becomes sponges of  
failed desires.  
Science says it is eclipse  
when birds try to race  
against downpour.  
to have liberty from a country  
is to flee against a fire  
that burns like overripe sun.  
life is in death,  
where bodies lie ageless  
like splitters of Olumo rock.  
Diaries speak mute languages  
when mouths go dumb.  
eyes become routes of seafarers  
when oceans have more dead bodies  
than fishes.  
let's say lost involves finding songs  
only to forget their lyrics & how to dance;  
let's say breaking is molding oneself  
then freeing it into balloons

& ships & open mouths of prison.

## Faisal

*Lyambee Aorabee*

—for Abdullahi

1.

I saw the wrath  
of your zipper  
when we stopped  
for a piss  
in Mayo Dassa.

The bald kuka tree  
gave up its birds  
when you howled in pain  
and walked back to the bus  
like a calf  
singing a strange surah  
with your  
teeth.

2.

I am tired of waiting  
to bathe you in the Benue.  
Tired of waiting  
to walk the quarries with you  
like two nomads  
searching for the roots  
of the sun.



## Seroconversion: A Matter of Silence

*Lyambee Aorabee*

I woke up sun-soaked  
in Saba  
and re-discovered  
the heat of my lover,  
the love-making  
an infant's first  
taste of the linoleum floor.

Half-awake now  
in Gyado villa  
my tongue is fire  
a celebration  
of candidiasis.

Tomorrow morning,  
I'll stand at the  
crossroads  
and announce my  
madness.

## If Picasso was a poet

*Eze Kenechukwu*

—for Bobby & Ryan

I can see why he's your *querencia*<sup>1</sup>  
his gaze holds a chest, like tequila and lime  
it was easy to loose yourself,  
to forget  
    how you had  
        once held unto a bottle of cheap chardonnay  
and called it lover,  
barometers for intimacy  
are eyes who know what it is to  
paint murals in their mother tongue  
and name it “fragments of the language of loss”.

---

1 *Querencia* is a metaphysical concept in the Spanish language. The term comes from the Spanish verb “querer,” which means “to desire.” In bullfighting, a bull may stake out his *querencia*, a certain part of the bull ring where he feels strong and safe (from where one draws power).

## **The Thing About Love**

*Al-Ameen Babawale*

Wake up and ask why love  
has chosen pepper red for a lipstick,

Look into the depth of my eyes,  
there read my heart and ask  
why it has begun a fire large  
enough to burn down a county  
in my chest.

It's simple:

everything that sweetens can  
also make our lives bitter, and  
love, whatever else it is, is no exception.

# IN MY DEFENCE I DOWNLOADED TINDER BECAUSE

*Donell Williams*

I needed something  
a pick-up not quite a line  
but that abstract something

humans crave  
bravely I call myself human  
when I was perched in my

thicket of instinct  
befriending every leaf & its  
shadows

& they came round  
asking for a starbucks coffee  
that capitalistic junk

so I'm in some jaws  
prostrate trying not to move  
at all

resembling every dead  
thing I've been hiding  
in a strange mouth

a diamond-noosed  
mouth w canines that  
scar

how every mouth

looks the same is a  
mystery

as is my survival  
I look so grotesque  
w my teethed out flesh

you could find me  
in the dark now & flay me  
shear me skeletal & com

pletely naked like an eye  
the not so veiny bit  
coddled in the socket

vague prey, dude, 20,  
seeking happily ever  
after & blunt teeth

that's my bio come  
2020 let's get these marks  
out my flesh

## **To Offin-ile (the place that smelled like rain, wet plants and burning trash)**

*Adeyele Adeniran*

My love for wet sands and the smell of vegetation are the scents that cling to me from my childhood, coming from a place where waves cooled under sun and men bathed by the seaside, making natural grains their occupation while the sands of time slowly hastened their strength. I grew up behind a black gate, where the burglary fence was my television to the real world. a land of fish and sand, men and women, girls and boys and the sounds of waves splashing. I grew up to the music of illiteracy and peace, times where it felt like before colonization, so sands and wet vegetation remind me of a place where I was small but not so small that I couldn't recognize there was a difference, as being invisible was my only way of observation to the human mind. I grew up tasting sands and crushing plants as I had finally learnt—you take the girl from her home but you don't take her home from her.

## The leaves that fell on Easter morn

*Obasa Funmilayo*

*—for the victims of the  
bombings in Sri Lanka*

*21/04/19*

a girl prances around the  
pillars as a sermon slips  
into the heart of the  
congregation.

an autumn breeze cascades  
its leaves in spring, a  
sea is set ablaze.

a church has been called  
by the sound of bombs:  
the sermon lingers in  
the air like smoke.

## **Chef's Kiss**

*Omotoyosi Salami*

### I.

There are people that are waiting for you to jump inside that water, you tell him  
under this black night sky, breeze raging  
and he doesn't flinch, he grins wildly

and that scares you,  
that makes you shiver because you know that he's not reluctant to leave you.

So you want to drink his blood, you want

to suck him dry till he's just a walking bag of dry bones,  
and sadness,  
but he won't ever stay put.

You tell him this.

And he says, Do you ever drink something

and think about all the mouths that have drunk from that bottle,

think dreamily about all the mouths that will drink from it  
after you?

He grits his teeth, hard.

And just stares at you as you cough and sputter on the floor,  
unmoving, unfeeling.

Still, there is a kindness in him.

Still, he is a dead man.

And a dead man is a man dead,  
loved or not.

### II.



Every Friday he flattens you with a kneading pin  
and folds you neatly, singing

*You Belong With Me* by Taylor Swift,

and then he keeps you in the lowest chest of his drawer,

that part

nobody ever dares to look in

because everyone's too scared  
of his big big hands.

He tells how much he wants to tear you apart

and scrub you colourless, and scrub you into shyness,  
only,

you don't see any of the beauty that men swear that you have,  
maybe over the years, you have emptied it into him,

Maybe one day he'll break, and then his fragments will be on the floor

immobile, and without autonomy,  
then he cannot run,

then you can crouch and pick up the pieces of him that are your right.

Still you're such a weathered thing, a beaten body

but you don't know any self other than this

and funny enough,

this is the happiest thing in this story,

where too many women have eyes on your blood, I mean his blood that is yours,

and you're tired, absolutely tired, of chasing such an agile thing.

## Cancer

*Success Agbenu*

In this poem youll not find what you want  
but if you read hard enough youll see the unpunctuated  
story of a boy whos discovering what his voice sounds like when he speaks to himself

In this poem youll hear screams  
that torment his thoughts at night and lurk around his memory  
at midday constantly reminding him of how frail he is before life And how death is always wel-  
coming

In this poem youll find the prayers hes been saying to free himself from this poem

In this poem youll find that he finds the clarity within his voice

And it is the softest silence hes ever heard

## Dusk

*Fiyinfoluwa Timothy Oladipo*

Because the sun now slumps into midnight,  
His weight willing down the world  
The same way a four-year-old might pull down  
Curtains, I am compelled to become crazy, maddened  
By the inevitability of this soundless, dumb  
Cul-de-sac inventing sound—the possibility of moths  
Learning to feel the weight of the wings against their bodies,  
The ground flaring up into a monotonous hymn at sunset, and  
The month of April leaning through the burglar bars asking Oga-Madam  
If she wants the compound walls scrubbed dry. I fear,  
Because the evening will soon dare to ask: *will you ever come home?*

## CONTRIBUTORS' BIO

**Animashaun A. Ameen**, 19, is a Nigerian poet and a student of the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. He lives and writes from Ilorin Nigeria. An oddball. A butterfly.

**Enotor Prosper** is a poet and drummer. Born and raised in Nigeria, Prosper currently studies English and Literature at the University of Benin, Nigeria. His work has appeared in publications, some of which include *Pencillite*, *Ethelzine*, *Elephantsnever*, *U-RIGHTS Magazine*, and *Okadabooks*. Prosper is the author of the chapbook *Suicide Notes*.

**Juliet Lubwama** is the daughter of Ugandan immigrants and an undergraduate student at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States. She served as 2017 National Student Poet for the Northeast, and her writing has been recognized by the National Scholastics Arts & Writing Awards and the National YoungArts Foundation.

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**Titilope Odeyinka** is a 19-year old Nigerian living in Nigeria, and is currently studying Psychology. She writes fiction, poetry and nonfiction, most of which have been published on her Medium page. She spends her free time binging Korean series, dancing terribly, and thinking about fashion and filmmaking.

**Adeyele Adeniran** is a poet, creative writer and feminist who resides in Lagos, Nigeria. She enjoys listening to good music and she loves eating. Her work has appeared in *the Kalabari Review*, *African Writers*, *Lit Up*, *NoteWorthy*, *Resistance Poetry*, and elsewhere. She studies History and Strategic Studies at the University of Lagos.

**Lyambee Aorabee** is a record producer/ songwriter based in Taraba, Nigeria. He is an under-

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**Donell Williams** is an olive bread and Mitski enthusiast. His work has been featured in the Journal of African Youth Literature, mutiny! mag and the Dime Show Review.

**Korede Kakaaki** is a young Nigerian who loves to listen to old songs. A first runner-up in the Inkspired Contest, he views poetry as an escape route. He explores depression, boyhood, women abuse and godhood in his poems. He hopes to make waves and get better someday.

**Orjichukwu ChikamObi Golding** is a Nigerian currently residing in and studying English Literature at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. He is the Assistant Custodian of The Writers Community and the first runner-up for The Muse Poetry Prize, 2019. He has published in his head.

**Oluwafunliayo Obasa** is a nonfiction writer, poet, and photography enthusiast. She writes from Kwara, Abuja, and her writing explores humanity and equality, desires, fears, denials, and more.

**Eze Kenechukwu** is a Nigerian who is currently studying Law. He loves jollof rice and is obsessed with Trevor Noah, he sometimes writes happy endings for those who don't believe in them. His work has been published by *The African Writer*, *Kreative Diadem*, *the Kalabari Review*, and *Agbowo*. He writes from Enugu, Nigeria.

**Omotoyosi Salami** is a Nigerian poet and student living in her home country. She has been published in *Petrichor Journal* and *Constellate Lit*. If you do not find her reading a book, you will find her writing something in her phone's Note app. She is on Twitter as @HM\_Omotoyosi.

**Success Agbenu** is a Ghanaian poet and writer. He is also a spoken word artist. He had his first feel of the stage when he was in high school. He is currently studying for BSc in Petroleum Engineering at the University of Energy and Natural Resources, Sunyani.

**Al-Ameen Babawale** is in his final year at Baptist Boys' High School. He is obsessed with the work of Tiana Clark and K-Ming Chang. His work in this anthology is his first published work.

**Fiyinfoluwa Timothy Oladipo** (b. 2001) is a British-Nigerian writer. His poem "Instructions

to the Three-Year Old Grandchild” won third prize in the Ankita Saxena poetry challenge, and “Diaries of Death in June” and “The Shape-Shifters” were highly commended in the Thinking Outside the Box Challenge and the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award respectively. He is an alum of the 2019 Adroit Summer Mentorship Program.

**Ernest O. Ògúnnyemí** is a young Nigerian writer. Recently, his works have appeared in *the Indianapolis Review*, *Glass*, *Lucent Dreaming*, *Memento: An Anthology of Contemporary Nigerian Poetry*, and some are forthcoming in *Yemassee*, *Kanstellation*, and *Down River Road Review*. He reads poetry submissions for Palette Poetry and he is an assistant editor at Counterclock. He Stans Nome Emeka Patrick on Twitter @ErnestOgunyemi.